

PHILOSOPHY  
RELIGION AND  
EDUCATION

# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

TELEVISION AND READING  
IMPROVING READABILITY  
HELPING CHILDREN TO WRITE  
BOOKS ON FAMILY LIFE



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# Elementary ENGLISH

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# ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

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## Television and Reading

DAISY B. GESSLEMAN<sup>1</sup>

What is television doing to our children? Is it reducing or eliminating reading? Is it a thing to be desired in our homes and schools, or a thing to be avoided as long as possible? What are we going to do with TV as a medium and what are its possibilities and its educational implications? These are dominant questions of the day. For, with the single exception of the atom bomb, TV has had more impact on our daily life than any other invention of recent years.

In order to partially answer these questions and to compare the reading activities of TV children of a given ability with non-TV children of approximately the same ability the writer conducted a study during May, 1951. The study<sup>2</sup> was conducted in the Dilworth Elementary School, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Thirty pairs, or sixty children, in the third grades with a very wide range of mental abilities and achievement records

<sup>1</sup>Third grade teacher, Dilworth Elementary School, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>2</sup>Daisy B. Gessleman, "Reading Activities of Third Grade Children from Television Homes as Contrasted with Children from Non-Television Homes," Master's Degree Thesis, University of Utah, 1951.

were selected for the study. The children were paired arbitrarily. For example, one child with TV and one child without TV but with approximately equal sigma indices were compared in the study. Helping with the study were 14 girls and 16 boys with TV-equipped homes and 14 girls and 16 boys without TV in their homes. Sixty-seven parents cooperated with the questionnaires for the parents' viewpoint. All the children and parents are estimated to belong to the middle class as to incomes and economic status.

Perhaps in this TV era we are entering, sigma indices and reading scores will cease to have significance as educational aids. In the near future the urgent problem may be to find out whether the child prefers Channel Four or Channel Five. People who live in that strange, ancient world apart from a TV receiver have no idea what it means to have KSL/KDYL instead of 20/20 vision.

However, in the present study, the writer studied and compared intelligence scores and reading achievement scores of the TV and non-TV children in an effort to determine if TV is adversely affecting the reading of third graders. Such factors

as whether the children were sleepy or alert, well-adjusted or insecure, imaginative or unimaginative, original or imitative were also considered to discover if TV has had any effect on these emotional traits possessed by children.

The physical health factors most pertinent to TV at present seem to be: eyesight, outdoor play, bedtime, and mealtime. These factors were examined to note the effects of TV on the physical health of the children.

The average sigma index for the TV group of children was 104.33 and the average for the non-TV group was 104.36. These averages<sup>3</sup> are slightly above the 100 score, which is the average for the Salt Lake City Schools. From the above facts it can readily be seen that both groups of children were as evenly matched as to sigma indices and sex as is humanly possible to do.

Reading tests 1 and 2 of the Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Battery, Form H were administered to the children in May, 1951.<sup>4</sup> The average equated reading score for the TV group of children was 35.63 and for the non-TV group the average was 36.43. The average for the non-TV group is .8 above the average for the TV group. This difference of .8 is so slight the writer considers it negligible.

Since the sigma indices of the two groups of children studied were practically the same and there is only a very slight difference in their reading achievement scores, the writer concluded that for this particular group of children TV had made

<sup>3</sup>Daisy B. Gessleman, *op. cit.*, p. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, 23-29.

no appreciable difference in reading comprehension.

In the compilation of emotional traits of the children as checked by the home room teachers the TV group tended to possess more negative and fewer positive traits than the non-TV group. The difference was not great, however. In the opinion of the home room teachers as to estimated scholarship 16 per cent more children from the non-TV group were doing above average school work than from the TV group.

For the most part the TV child seemed to take the new medium in stride and achieve success in reading comparable to the child without the so-called disrupting influence of TV.

Possessing a TV set in the home did not seem to make any difference in the socio-metric status of the children either. The average number of friends or pals reported for both groups was four.

In general, the children without TV sets were maintaining an earlier bedtime than the children with TV sets. This seemed to have little, if any, effect upon scholarship, reading, and health as yet. Many had not had TV sets long enough to accurately judge if this will affect them adversely in time.

Many articles deplore the fact that TV interferes seriously with the mealtime of the children. The writer found very few complaints from the parents about mealtime interference or refusal to go to bed on time. Over sixty-two per cent of the children reported no visual strain or discomfort whatever from televiewing.

Both groups were spending some time



in outdoor play after school hours. The amount of outdoor play varied greatly from one-half hour to more than two hours daily depending on the weather and the season of the year. The time spent in outdoor play was practically the same for both groups.

Television is literally abounding in educational programs. Children have reported that they have learned to sew, knit, cook, and build bird houses, all from watching TV.

There are a number of good TV shows that help the children in their school work and help them to enjoy their reading more, but, the question is — do the children ever see them or are they too busy watching the harmful ones?

The video programs as listed by the daily paper for three weeks were included in the questionnaire and the children checked the programs they regularly watched. In the TV group the range in number of programs checked was from 16 to 102. The total was 1400 and the average was 47 programs televised regularly by each child. In the non-TV group the range was from a low of 0 to a high of 69. The total was 620 and the average 21 programs per child. Seven pupils in this group reported seeing no programs at all and this fact considerably brought down the average for this group.

The length of time spent televiewing for the TV group ranged from  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour to  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours daily with the average 3 hours daily. The length of time spent televiewing for the non-TV group ranged from none at all, seldom,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour a week, and up to more than 2 hours daily.

It was impossible to get an average for this group because of the great variance.

The favorite TV shows preferred by the Dilworth children and the number of times mentioned is as follows:

1. Lone Ranger,	18 times
2. Six-Gun Theater,	10 times
3. Time for Beany,	5 times
4. Sandman Stories,	5 times
5. Super Circus	5 times
6. You Asked For It	4 times
7. Gaslight Follies	4 times
8. Comedy Hour,	4 times
9. Flash Gordon,	4 times
10. Cartoon Capers,	4 times

Mentioned three times each as favorites were the following: *Sandy Strong*, *Lost City*, *Movies for Kids*, *Gene Autry*, *Milton Berle*, *Stu Irwin*, and *Sagebrush Playhouse*.

The comments of the children in all instances indicated that they approve whole-heartedly the new medium and are thrilled with watching TV programs.

Even though sixty of the sixty-seven parents who replied to the questionnaire definitely felt that children should not watch crime, brutal sports, and murder mysteries, many of the children were watching this type of show. Approximately one-third of the children didn't seem to care for this type of show even though they watched now and then. Two-thirds of the group said they liked wrestling, boxing, and murder mysteries.

Four children reported that watching this type of show often disturbed their sleep. Eleven reported disturbance only sometimes and thirty-three reported TV never bothered their rest. The disturbed children stated they were scared by such shows and had bad dreams as a result.

In the TV group of children 23 remembered the commercials and 4 did not. In the non-TV group 21 children remembered the commercials and 6 did not. Almost every child interviewed seemed to remember a different set of commercials. However, commercials mentioned several or more times by the children were: cigarettes, soaps, Tide, Bab-O, Glim, Ajax, Duz, beer, bread, Cheerioats, milk, carpets (Mohawk and Bigelow), shoes (Weatherbird and Red Goose), Canada Dry, watches, Skippy Peanut Butter, and toasters.

Twenty-two children said that they had not bought or coaxed for any product because they saw it advertised on TV. Twenty-six children reported they had at one time or another bought or coaxed for something they saw advertised on TV. The things they mentioned buying or wanting to buy as a result of TV advertising were: bicycle, Canada Dry, Cheerioats, football, Story Princess Book, Red Goose Shoes, Ranger costumes, puppets, Gold Medal Flour, bread, Magic Mask, Rocket Rings, and Spiedel Watch Band.

TV has been accused of decreasing the normal wholesome reading activities of children. Some critics have even gone so far as to predict that TV will eventually kill reading, and that we can look forward to a future generation of human potted plants, content to only sit and watch.

In this study 39 per cent of the children stated they had been stimulated to read a book because of TV. One girl told about getting interested in reading Pony Express books as a result of a TV show she saw.

In the TV group the children read

from no library books at all up to ten per week, a total of 66 books per week, or an average of 2.2 books per week per child. In the non-TV group the range of books read was from none at all to 12 per week, the total was 71, and the average was 2.36 books per week per child. Thus there was no appreciable difference in the amount of library book reading of the two groups. It would also seem that those who like to read will continue to read and those who seldom read or never read will continue as they have been regardless of TV.

About two-thirds of the children in both groups were taking and reading children's magazines. The magazines and the number of child readers follow:

1. <i>Children's Friend</i> ,	27
2. <i>Jack and Jill</i> ,	5
3. <i>Activities</i> ,	5
4. <i>Child Life</i> ,	2
5. <i>Boy's Life</i> ,	1
6. <i>Wild Life</i> ,	1
7. <i>Highlights for Children</i>	1

All but five of the children from both groups were reading the daily paper in part and television had made no difference in this type of reading. The comic section of the daily paper was read by over 85 per cent of the children interviewed, 23 per cent were reading the headlines, and about 13 per cent were reading the sports page in the daily newspapers. Other sections of the daily paper read by some of the children were: TV and radio programs, school news, accidents, world news, weather, murders and killings, war, and the family section.

These children were for the most part great comic readers. In addition to the comics in the daily paper they were reading many comic books. The number of comics varied in both groups from none

at all up to 15 a week. The average for the TV group was 3.2 comics per week per child. For the non-TV group the average was 3.7 comics per week per child. In both groups the favorite comic with the most children was *Donald Duck*. *Mickey Mouse* and *Bugs Bunny* tied for second place in popularity. The children gave third place to *Captain Marvel* and *Porky Pig*. *Little Lulu* was fourth in their choices and *Straight Arrow* and *Lone Ranger* rated fifth. Other comics liked by the children were *Super Man*, *Roy Rogers*, and *Tom and Jerry*. Nearly all the children like comics very much and stated they read all they could get hold of. Some said they read stacks of old comics over and over. Other children borrowed or exchanged with their friends.

Most of the children liked to listen to the radio. The TV children were listening to an average of 1.53 programs per child. The non-TV children were listening to an average of 3.53 programs per child. The non-TV group were listening to more than twice as many radio programs as the TV children were. The favorite radio programs cited by the children are as follows in the order of preference:

1. *Lone Ranger*
2. *Clyde Beatty*
3. *Sky King*
4. *Let's Pretend*
5. *Big John and Sparky*
6. *Straight Arrow*
7. *The Shadow*
8. *Lux Program*
9. *Uncle Woody*
10. *Story Princess*
11. *Arthur Godfrey*

The Dilworth children definitely like the *Lone Ranger*. Both on TV and on the radio his program was the number one

favorite of the children. In comic books, *Lone Ranger* rated fifth in popularity.

The non-TV children were attending the movies slightly more than the TV children. However, neither group attended movies to any great extent. Nearly half of the children reported they attended movies much less since TV programs were made available to them.

Both groups of children preferred cartoon pictures. Surprisingly enough, education pictures rated second with the children and Westerns third. Serial, mystery, and gangster pictures were liked by a considerable number of children. Least popular of all were the sad, society, and love type of picture.

This particular study showed that events outside the home other than movies have also been somewhat affected by TV. The non-TV children were attending concerts and athletic games about twice as much as the children who had TV sets. The attendance at the University of Utah Young People's Plays was comparable for both groups. One boy in comment said, "I don't go to shows because I have TV. I don't have to go to games. I can see good ones on TV."

About fifty per cent of the children from both groups were taking music or dancing lessons outside of school. Nearly all of the children from both groups were participating in one or more children's clubs. Fifty-five per cent of the children participated in Primary activities. Forty per cent did Cub or Brownie scouting and eleven per cent of the children belonged to neighborhood clubs. There was no great difference in the club participation of the two groups.

In the TV group 15 of the children had hobbies and 15 did not. In the non-TV group 25 children had hobbies and 5 did not have hobbies. In this survey many more of the non-TV children had developed hobbies.

The hobbies mentioned several or more times by the children were: music, horseback riding, bicycle riding, roller skating, dolls, carving, archery, sewing, hand work such as knitting, crocheting, weaving, needlepoint, and embroidery.

The factors of pretend and make believe were comparable in both groups. Thirty-seven children said they often pretended to be someone else, while twenty-three said they never indulged in make believe. Mostly in both groups they pretended to be cowboys and movie stars. Some children mentioned specific cowboys such as Lone Ranger, Hopalong, Roy Rogers, Ghost Rider, and Gene Autry. The specific movie stars mentioned by the children were Veronica Lake, Shirley Temple, and Dinah Shore.

The children interviewed were asked to express the three things they would like very much to have for themselves or their families. In the TV group one child wished for a TV set of his own. Another child wished for a new set with a larger screen. In the non-TV group the number one wish of ten of the children was to have a TV set in their homes. Other wishes mentioned by all the children included: short wave radio, radio set, record player, horses or ponies, new or better cars for the family, new or bigger bicycles, fancy or larger houses, room of their own, trips, money in varying amounts, baby brother or sister,

pets, automatic washers, clothes, and playthings.

As a result of this study the writer has made the following conclusions:

TV has not as yet adversely affected the reading comprehension of the third graders studied. Those children having TV equipped homes achieved success in the reading test approximately the same as the non-TV children.

The children in the non-TV homes maintained an earlier bedtime than the children in TV homes and excelled slightly in the group doing above average school work. The non-TV children also excelled a very little in possessing positive emotional traits. These points mentioned were so small as to make very little difference in the over-all picture now, but, as time goes on and sets multiply in the homes these factors could increase and show up more adversely in all school work.

TV children listen to the radio much less and attend movies less than non-TV children. In attendance at other entertainment functions outside the home the non-TV group was slightly ahead of the TV group.

In the matter of the reading of library books, comics, children's magazines, and the daily paper there was no appreciable difference in the two groups studied.

Right now it seems all other media are taking second place to "King Television" but as TV passes the stage of fad or novelty it may achieve a proper permanent place in our way of life.

Most parents and educators interviewed felt that at present TV programming needs some improvements, but that



on the whole the advantages of TV far outweigh the disadvantages.

Nearly all the parents interviewed felt that all the young children need much supervision, guidance, and help in interpretation in their televising to make it most useful and worthwhile to them. Nearly all agree that very young children ought to be kept strictly on a very bland diet of TV: puppet shows, gay films, circuses, with all horror pictures eliminated. Such a diet would cure nightmares and tensions.

The problems discussed most often in the connection with television and children are the usual child discipline and social problems and are not at all unique to televising. Therefore, TV should not be blamed solely when they occur.

TV is not harmful or injurious to the normal eyesight of children. However, excesses in viewing, like excesses in anything, need to be avoided.

Presently the entertainment value of TV is uppermost but many people in the field believe that in the near future the educational value of TV will be greatly increased.

Several schools outside of Salt Lake City have used TV successfully in the classroom at all levels of learning. What they have done Salt Lake City can do also once the necessary machinery is set up.

Many children, including the ones in this study, view excessively. Most educators would agree that three hours daily is excessive viewing when the child is in school. Many educators would also question the advisability of third graders viewing so many Westerns.

For the small child visual and audio aids properly used are one of the best learning aids we have. It takes less effort for him to look at TV than to read a book with hard, baffling words. Also, a good TV show is probably better than a poor book. Our big problems as teachers, librarians, and parents is to help children to become interested in and to read good books. We need to glamorize books and give children much help and encouragement in their attempts to read. With much effort on the part of adults who work with children perhaps TV time and reading time can be kept in proper balance and relationship for the children. Television can be used to broaden the child's interests and the adult can capitalize on what the child sees and try to find books which will give additional information on the same subjects seen on the screen.

Actually there is nothing to fear about what TV is doing to our children. The evils of the TV age can be eliminated when parents and children cooperate and are selective in program choice. Many believe that a good Western does not hurt the youngster once in a while so long as he will watch the good types of pictures also. Gradually, with help, the child will learn to enjoy the really good shows and musicals.

It will help, too, to let the TV networks and sponsors know when we are pleased and displeased with their efforts programwise. Since the networks insist they put on the type of shows the public likes, it is only the viewing public that can change the type of show seen on our TV screens.

# Improving Readability of Printed Materials

PAUL WITTY\*

Conditions of modern life have produced a need for more "readable" materials as well as for efficient habits and skills in reading many kinds of printed material. The adult today has tax forms to be filled out, pamphlets on many topics to be read, and varied instructions to be followed in connection with business, government, and civic life.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the popularity and availability of picture presentations have decreased the need for certain types of reading skills. Yet it may readily be shown that the effective citizen today must read widely and critically in many fields. There appears to be no substitute for reading as a method for obtaining certain types of information.

## *Need for Readable Materials*

For many years, educators have been concerned over the reading difficulty of many publications—particularly in areas essential for promoting growth and competency in the citizen. A large number of these materials demands reading abilities far beyond those of the typical adult. In 1940, it was reported that the average American had attended school only eight or nine years.<sup>2</sup> Many others have had much less education; in fact, about one-seventh of the adult population over 25 years of age had not gone beyond the fourth grade.<sup>3</sup> For these peo-

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII (January 21, 1948), 11-20, 28.

<sup>2</sup>Bureau of Census, "Characteristics of the Population," Part I, *United States Population Report, United States Summary*, II (Bureau of Census, 1940).

<sup>3</sup>Homer Kempfer, "Simpler Reading Materials Needed for 50,000,000 Adults," *School Life*, XXXII (May, 1950), 115.

ple, many published materials are too difficult. In addition, there are large numbers of individuals who although they have attended school eight or nine years, have used reading skills so little after completing school that they have become indifferent to the use of books for obtaining information or gaining pleasure and satisfaction. Accordingly, their reading proficiency has decreased to such a degree that many publications would be too difficult for them to read with ease. These facts account perhaps for the relatively small number of adults who use the public library.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the foregoing that have inadequate reading skills, there are many other adults who fail to comprehend fully the materials they read. In fact, it has been pointed out that millions of people vote and in other ways decide crucial issues without having acquired a thorough understanding of the issues involved and the possible results of their action.<sup>5</sup>

To prevent functional illiteracy, and to attain a higher level of educational attainment generally, more effective reading programs must be developed for children and youth. Such programs must recognize more completely the varied purposes for reading and must offer appropriate opportunities for the development, maintenance, and application of varied reading skills needed at different levels of development. There is a need too for adult education on a rather large scale. The army program in reading for functionally illiterate men demonstrated that most adults can be taught to read effective-

<sup>4</sup>Homer Kempfer, "Simpler Reading Materials Needed for 50,000,000 Adults," *School Life*, XXXII (May, 1950), 115.

<sup>5</sup>Lyman Bryson, Foreword in *The Art of Plain Talk* by Rudolph Flesch. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946, ix-x.

ly. In so doing, it revealed the factors underlying improvement in the reading status of adults; namely, systematic instruction and the availability of readable materials.

It is clear that there is a great need for easy reading materials on many topics of concern to adults. Such materials would serve perhaps 50 million people who read very little today.<sup>9</sup> How can this material be developed? Certainly our progress in its production has been slow, if we are to judge from the statements frequently made about the reading difficulty of many publications designed for adults. Rudolph Flesch has stressed repeatedly the difficulty of numerous informative books, magazine articles, and government publications.<sup>7</sup>

One reason for the slowness in the development of materials of appropriate difficulty is that, although methods for estimating "readability" have been known for some time they have rarely been considered necessary in the construction of books for adults. However, they have been used to some extent in making textbooks for children.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Concept of Readability*

The term "readability" has several meanings. Research workers in the field of typography regard readability and legibility as interchangeable terms. A broader concept has been advocated by other students. For example, W. S. Gray and Bernice Leary interpret the term to include such factors as the style of writing and the nature of the subject matter.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Homer Kempfer, "Simpler Reading Materials Needed for 50,000,000 Adults," *School Life*, XXXII (May, 1950), p. 115.

<sup>7</sup>Rudolph Flesch, "A Readability Formula in Practice," *Elementary English*, XXV. (May, 1948).

<sup>8</sup>Edgar Dale, and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII. (January 21, 1948).

<sup>9</sup>William S. Gray, and Bernice E. Leary. *What Makes A Book Readable*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935.

Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of readability has been suggested by Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall: "In the broadest sense... readability is the sum total (including the interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affects the success that a group of readers have with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it, read it at an optimum speed, and find it interesting." These authors include the reader in their definition "...success depends upon other things beside the printed material itself. It depends upon the reader—his skill in reading, his intelligence, his experience, his maturity, his interest and purpose in reading."<sup>10</sup>

### *Efforts to Make Printed Materials "Readable"*

It has long been recognized that factors such as the interest-appeal, typography, and vocabulary affect the ease with which passages are read. More than a hundred years ago, McGuffey attacked the problem of readability in compiling a series of graded readers for school children.<sup>11</sup> From the time of the McGuffey readers to the present, efforts have been made to develop textbooks of genuine interest and appeal to pupils in different grades.

Modern teachers utilize inventories and anecdotal approaches to ascertain the interests of boys and girls. They employ the results of surveys to ascertain common interests with which reading experiences may be associated. Needs are disclosed too by a consideration of developmental tasks and their significance in the guidance of reading at different stages of growth.<sup>12</sup> Such approaches have shown clearly that interest and motive do contribute to "readability."

<sup>10</sup>Edgar Dale, and Jeanne S. Chall, "The Concept of Readability," *Elementary English*, XXVI (January, 1949), 23.

<sup>11</sup>William S. Gray, "Progress in the Study of Readability," *The Elementary School Journal*, XLVII (May, 1947), 491-99.

<sup>12</sup>Paul Witty, *Reading in Modern Education*. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949.

Another phase of readability that has received attention for over half a century is typography. Research students have studied such factors as size and style of type, spacing between lines, width of margins, and color and texture of paper. These studies have led to the following conclusions:

1. The width in the strokes of letters affects readability.
2. Readability is adversely affected only by extreme or ornate style of type.
3. Material consisting largely of small letters is more readable than that set in capitals.
4. Lines of about 80 millimeters in length seem to be the most legible. Space between lines is advantageous to readability. Margins too affect readability.
5. On wide pages, two columns are more legible than one wide column. A single rule between the two columns is as effective as leaving a space between columns. Indented paragraphs promote ease in reading.
6. Readability does not seem to be affected by either glossy or unfinished paper. Color in type does not seem to affect readability provided a contrast between paper and type is provided.
7. Studies in illumination show that the reader should avoid lighting which might result in "bright sources in the periphery of the visual field which might stimulate the reader to focus on them with resulting fatiguing conflict in the eye muscles."<sup>13</sup>

Many studies have been made of vocabulary in relation to readability. As early as 1923, Bertha Lively and S. L. Pressey attempted to measure the vocabulary difficulty of science textbooks.<sup>14</sup> In 1927, F. D. Keboch presented

<sup>13</sup>Harold E. Burtt, "Typography and Readability," *Elementary English*, XXVI (April, 1949), 212-221.

<sup>14</sup>Bertha A. Lively, and S. L. Pressey, "A Method for Measuring the 'Vocabulary Burden' of Textbooks," *Educational Administration and Supervision*, IX (October, 1923), 389-98.

a study of the vocabulary employed in history textbooks.<sup>15</sup> One year later, E. W. Dolch published a study of "vocabulary burden".<sup>16</sup> About the same time, Mabel Vogel and Carleton Washburne included vocabulary analysis in a study of the reading difficulty of children's books. The Thorndike word list was employed to determine the difficulty of words.<sup>17</sup>

The Thorndike word list, used in several of the early studies, included 10,000 words. This list was extended and was published in 1931 in a book entitled, *A Teacher's Word Book of 20,000 Words*.<sup>18</sup> The original list was obtained by counting words in many published sources and arranging them in order of frequency. In the 1931 list, words were added from wider and more varied sources. In 1944, E. L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge presented *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words*, based on more extensive word counts.<sup>19</sup>

Edgar Dale compared word lists and presented in 1941 a list of 769 words based on the Thorndike list and a study of the "first thousand most frequent words known by children entering first grade."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup>F. D. Keboch, "Variability of Word Difficulty in Five American History Textbooks," *Journal of Educational Research*, XV (January, 1927), 22-26.

<sup>16</sup>Edward W. Dolch, "Vocabulary Burden," *Journal of Educational Research*, XVII (March, 1928), 170-183.

<sup>17</sup>Mabel Vogel, and Carleton Washburne, "An Objective Method of Determining Grade Placement of Children's Reading Material," *Elementary School Journal*, XXVIII (January, 1928), 373-81.

<sup>18</sup>Edward L. Thorndike, *A Teacher's Word Book of 20,000 Words*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1931.

<sup>19</sup>Edward L. Thorndike, and Irving Lorge, *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944.

<sup>20</sup>Edgar Dale, "A Comparison of Two Word Lists," *Educational Research Bulletin*, X, (December, 1941).



E. W. Dolch also compared word lists and increased the Dale list to 1,000 words by addition of words known by first grade children. B. R. Buckingham and E. W. Dolch also devised a word list for use in textbook construction.<sup>21</sup> One of the most practical short lists was also prepared by Dolch who assembled 220 words generally known by intermediate grade pupils.

Significant recent work in the development of word lists has been reported by Henry Rinsland in *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children*. Rinsland derived his count from a study of more than 6,000,000 words found in the written work of pupils in grades 1 through 8. More than 200,000 papers were examined and 25,632 different words were assembled. A table gives the 14,571 words that appear three or more times in any grade.<sup>22</sup>

The foregoing lists have been widely used to study the difficulty of reading materials. They have been occasionally used too in the construction of books for children and adults.

### *Formulae for Readability*

In almost all formulae for determining readability, vocabulary difficulty is an important element. As early as 1929, Alfred Lewerenz concluded that words beginning with w, h, b, are easier to read than words beginning with e and i.<sup>23</sup> George Johnson reported in 1930 that the difficulty of reading material may be determined by the relative number of polysyllabic words employed.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup>B. R. Buckingham, and E. W. Dolch, *A Combined Word List*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1936.

<sup>22</sup>Henry D. Rinsland, *A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1945.

<sup>23</sup>Alfred S. Lewerenz, "Measurement of the Difficulty of Reading Materials," *Los Angeles Educational Research Bulletin*, VIII (March, 1929), 11-16.

<sup>24</sup>George R. Johnson, "An Objective Method of Determining Reading Difficulty," *Journal of Educational Research*, XXI (April, 1930), 283-87.

About the same time, W. W. Patty and W. I. Painter devised a formula for determining the difficulty of high school reading materials. The formula was based on an "average word-weight value" derived from the Thorndike word list.<sup>25</sup>

Edgar Dale and Ralph Tyler presented in 1934 a formula to predict the success that individuals having a limited reading ability might expect with certain printed materials on the topic of health. The factors considered were: number of technical words, number of hard words, and number of indeterminate clauses.<sup>26</sup>

Gray and Leary's formula for determining the difficulty of reading materials for adults of poor reading ability appeared in 1935.<sup>27</sup> This formula was based upon five factors:

- (1) number of different hard words
- (2) number of first-, second-, and third-person pronouns
- (3) average sentence length in words
- (4) percentage of different words
- (5) number of prepositional phrases

Lorge employed the following three of the factors used by Gray and Leary in devising another formula: average sentence length, number of different hard words, and number of prepositional phrases. This formula was presented in 1939.<sup>28</sup>

In 1939, Gerald Yoakam also reported another technique for determining the difficulty

<sup>25</sup>W. W. Patty, and W. I. Painter, "A Technique for Measuring the Vocabulary Burden of Textbooks," *Journal of Educational Research*, XXIV, (September, 1931), 127-34.

<sup>26</sup>Edgar Dale, and Ralph W. Tyler, "A Study of Factors Influencing the Difficulty of Reading Materials for Adults of Limited Reading Ability," *Library Quarterly*, IV, (July, 1934), 384-412.

<sup>27</sup>William S. Gray, and Bernice E. Leary, *What Makes A Book Readable*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935.

<sup>28</sup>Irving Lorge, "Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children," *Elementary English Review*, XVI, (October, 1939), 229-33.

of reading materials. He employed Thorndike's Word Book of 20,000 words to estimate the difficulty of printed materials.<sup>29</sup>

Recognizing the differences in the approaches to readability, Flesch attempted to devise a more comprehensive and valid method. In 1943, he reported a formula in which he employed three variables: average sentence length, affixed morphemes, and number of personal references.<sup>30</sup> Flesch revised this formula in 1948. It now consists of two parts, one designed to measure "reading ease" of a passage, and the other to evaluate "human interest" appeal. The first part is based on number of syllables and average sentence length; the second part is based on number of personal words and personal sentences found in passages.<sup>31</sup>

In 1948, Dale and Chall reported their readability formula based upon the Dale list of 3000 words. Two variables are used in this formula: word count and average sentence length.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Applications of Readability Formulae*

The readability formulae employed most widely are perhaps those developed by Flesch, Lorge, and Dale and Chall. Flesch states that his original purpose was to provide a tool for the selection of reading materials for adults. The *American Library Association* used the Flesch formula in making a list of very easy books for adults. The formula, however, has not only been

used for book selection and grading, but it has also been employed to aid students in preparing readable compositions. It has proved practical too as a guide in editing newspaper reports, advertising copy, government publications, and bulletins and leaflets for special groups such as farmers.<sup>33</sup>

Margaret Kerr predicts increased use of readability formulae by schools. She approves the growing tendency of school administrators to appoint committees of teachers to select textbooks and believes that classroom teachers, with the aid of such formulae, can make more desirable and efficient choices.<sup>34</sup>

Another interesting example of the use of formulae is in the revisions of health materials issued by the *National Tuberculosis Association*.<sup>35</sup> Readability formulae have also been applied to scripts for radio broadcasts. For example, application of the Flesch formula to the scripts of several news programs revealed that most of them were written on a tenth-grade reading level. Six out of ten Americans would find such news difficult to read. That such persons would encounter difficulties too in interpreting broadcasts of this degree of difficulty is suggested by a recent investigation. Chall and Dial studied the reactions of college students to broadcasts of different kinds. They concluded that readability formulae are useful to determine three levels of listening difficulty: easy, medium, and hard.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Gerald A. Yoakam, "A Technique for Determining the Difficulty of Reading Material," Unpublished Material. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1939.

<sup>30</sup>Rudolph Flesch, *Marks of a Readable Style*. Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 897. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943.

<sup>31</sup>Rudolph Flesch, "A New Readability Yardstick," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, XXXII (June, 1948), 221-233.

<sup>32</sup>Edgar Dale, and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII (January 21, 1948), 11-20, 28.

<sup>33</sup>Rudolph Flesch, "A Readability Formula in Practice," *Elementary English*, XXV (May, 1948).

<sup>34</sup>Margaret Kerr, "Use of Readability Formulas in Selecting textbooks," *Elementary School Journal*, XLIX (March, 1949), 411-414.

<sup>35</sup>Edgar Dale, Edgar and Hilda Hager, "How to Write to be Understood," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII (November 10, 1948), 207-216.

<sup>36</sup>Jeanne S. Chall, and Harold E. Dial, "Predicting Listener Understanding and Interest in Newcasts," *Educational Research Bulletin*, XXVII, (September 15, 1948), 141-151, 168.

### *Evaluation of Readability Formulae*

Inconsistencies in the use of different formulae have been reported from time to time. Catherine Elliott in 1941 made a critical analysis of five readability techniques: the Pressey-Lively, the Patty-Painter, the Yoakam, the Washburne-Vogel, and the Gray-Leary. She found inconsistencies in the results obtained with different formulae.<sup>37</sup>

Chall states that "the work in readability has been a search for two things, an adequate criterion to determine the relative difficulty of specific passages, and the identification of the elements in the text that would best measure that difficulty." The variability in the elements considered important may be suggested by the fact that vocabulary or related types of difficulty are measured by checking against standard word lists, and by counting syllables, abstract words, and affixed morphemes. Some formulae also measure some phase of sentence structure. In addition, the element of human interest is estimated by ascertaining the number of personal references or of personal pronouns. It is obvious then that research is needed to determine more fully the value of each of these different factors in determining and appraising readability. Such approaches appear more valid when applied to materials for elementary school pupils than when used to determine the readability of materials for older persons. Moreover, these approaches appear to have conspicuous limitations when they are applied to materials designed for use in specific fields.

Flesch calls for "a refinement of the available measurement techniques and the utilization of work in related fields, particularly the psychology of personality." A broadened formula should make, he believes, provision for the measurement of other language elements such as participles, verbs, adjectives, and particles.

<sup>37</sup>Catherine J. Elliott, "A Critical Analysis of the Objective Method of Measuring Reading Difficulty," *Pittsburgh Schools*, XV (March, 1941), 201-9.

Above all, the problem should be approached as a study in linguistics including analysis techniques such as those employed in Block and Trager's *Outline of Linguistic Analysis*.<sup>38</sup>

Kerr believes that the formulae have practical values even in their present stage of development. In pointing out the limitations of the formulae, she warns that the results of formulae should serve merely as a departure for a more detailed analysis. W. S. Gray also notes that "research should aid in developing more effective ways of identifying the kinds of materials that are most readable for given individuals. The fact is widely recognized that comprehension varies with numerous factors such as intelligence, background of experience, motives, and cultural status."<sup>39</sup>

Irving Lorge too has stressed some of the serious limitations of readability formulae and has set forth the following warning:

"Readability formulae are no panacea. They do not tell anything about the kind of ideas expressed or the interrelationships among them. At best they are yardsticks. If they are not inflated into a recipe for writing, they are a useful adjunct in the objective evaluation of written and spoken materials. Their use, however, cannot be a complete substitute for the wisdom of experience."<sup>40</sup>

The foregoing discussion raises serious questions as to the desirability of placing too much emphasis upon formulae in constructing readable materials. It is doubtful whether formulae should be employed to guide the initial preparation of materials. At best, they afford only a rough check on the ease of read-

<sup>38</sup>Rudolph Flesch, "A Readability Formula in Practice," *Elementary English*, XXV, (May, 1948).

<sup>39</sup>William S. Gray, "Progress in the Study of Readability," *The Elementary School Journal*, XLVII (May, 1947), 491-99.

<sup>40</sup>Irving Lorge, "Readability Formulae — An Evaluation," *Elementary English*, XXVI, (February, 1949).

ing various presentations. An author, keeping in mind the group for whom materials are being developed, should attempt to present his ideas and concepts clearly. His presentation should be closely related to the experience of the group. He should bear in mind that interest and motive will affect readability. If his materials are to be used by persons of limited reading ability, run-on or involved sentences, excessive use of affixes, high frequency of prepositional phrases, and unusual words should be avoided.

After materials have been prepared with the foregoing precautions, the manner in which they are used will affect readability. Formulae do not take into account the teaching procedures used and the ways new words and concepts are introduced. These considerations are important in assuring readability, as the following account of the Army's reading program will demonstrate.

#### *Army Program for Illiterates*

Special Training Units were initiated during World War II to offer functionally illiterate and non-English speaking men the literacy skills they needed as soldiers. It was necessary because of man power shortages to complete the literacy training in an average period of eight weeks. Consequently, efficient instructional procedures and materials had to be developed.

The Army Reader was designed to present the general vocabulary; and filmstrips, portfolios, and picture materials were devised to introduce the specialized vocabularies of military subjects. The primary aim in writing all materials was to present essential information simply and accurately. After the first drafts of some manuscripts were prepared, the Lorge formula and the Dale word list were employed to check "readability." However, this approach was considered one part only of the readability procedure. It was recognized that readability is in part a function of learning, and that effective reading depends upon experience and famili-

arity with the concepts employed in various presentations. Interest was considered to be a potent factor affecting readability. Widespread use was made too of visual and auditory aids for it was believed that filmstrips and picture materials would facilitate the learning process and foster readability. Finally, it was kept in mind at all times, as Edgar Dale has pointed out, that one way of assuring readability is to keep materials close to the experience of the learner.

Before devising instructional materials, a list of the words most frequently used by the soldier in his daily life was prepared. This list was drawn up from counts of words found in the *Soldier's Handbook* and other manuals, as well as from a study of word usage in various routine Army situations. Consideration was given to the frequency ratings of these words in the preparation of all materials for teaching the three R's. Several specialized lists were also developed for making instructional materials in military subjects such as *Defense Against Chemical Attack* and *Military Discipline and Courtesy*.<sup>41</sup>

#### *Developing a Sight Vocabulary*

The first step in vocabulary building involved the cultivation of a basic stock of sight words. It should be kept in mind that many men assigned to Special Training Units were unable to recognize even five or ten printed words, and that all of them needed help in order to read silently even the simplest passages.

Various ways of presenting the basic stock of sight words were considered. It was decided to experiment with the filmstrip approach in getting the men "ready to read." A filmstrip is a continuous series of still pictures, charts, or diagrams. Speed of projection is controlled by the instructor, who can retain any frame (picture) in a filmstrip as long as necessary to as-

<sup>41</sup>Golda Van Buskirk and Ann Bowman worked with the writer in the preparation of language materials for the Army programs.



sure mastery of its contents. Moreover, any frame or series of frames may be reviewed many times.<sup>42</sup>

Forty-six nouns of high frequency in the general vocabulary list were presented in the filmstrip, *The Story of Private Pete*. These words were not only generally useful in routine Army life, but they were also employed in the first part of the *Army Reader*, the textbook devised for these men.

*The Story of Private Pete* is made up of four series of frames dealing with Private Pete's first experience in camp: (1) "Private Pete and His Uniform," frames 1 to 12; (2) "Private Pete Looks at His Camp," frames 13 to 22; (3) "Private Pete Eats His Dinner," frames 23 to 33; and (4) "Private Pete Goes to Bed," frames 34 to 44. Each series consists of approximately ten frames which present an overall picture of a camp scene and several breakdowns of the scene with attention centered on certain objects through the use of word labels. The largest number of new words included on any frame is three.

After about eight or ten frames are shown to introduce the words and objects in a series, a single frame is used to present the objects in a new relationship. There are no labels on this frame; it is followed by another frame containing a picture which includes all objects previously identified and all words used in the preceding frames of the series. Thus one may

check with ease the student's recognition of the words. Two summary scenes follow. Under these pictures, a printed story presents the words in each series in meaningful context. The use of these frames provides additional opportunity for review and for stressing contextual reading. Through this approach the student is offered a challenging, highly interesting, and natural experience with language. Two other filmstrips, *Introduction to Language* (Parts 1 and 2), were designed to extend vocabulary and to introduce thirty-one verbs and twelve prepositions.

When the soldiers were able to recognize quickly the words presented in the first language filmstrip, *The Story of Private Pete*, the textbook, the *Army Reader*, was introduced as the second step in the vocabulary building and reading program. Instruction in silent and oral reading then proceeded rapidly. The other two language filmstrips were used after the men had had considerable experience in reading simple passages. Through the use of these filmstrips, successful performance in dealing with more difficult reading was fostered and steady progress was assured.

#### *Enlarging a Speaking Vocabulary*

Suggestions for developing a speaking vocabulary were provided in *Instruction in Special Training Units*, a guide for teachers. It was pointed out that the instructor should recognize that facility in oral expression precedes skill in silent reading. Instructors were directed to encourage discussion and to provide practice for the men in pronouncing common words, phrases and sentences. Several ways of stressing the meanings of nouns were illustrated in the guide; for example, pointing to an object or a picture to clarify the meanings of certain nouns. For words denoting action or feeling, gestures and demonstrations were suggested as means of promoting understanding.

Considerable attention was given in the guide to simple principles of language instruc-

<sup>42</sup>The following filmstrips were developed for use in Special Training Units: *A Soldier's General Orders*; *Military Discipline and Courtesy*; *How to Wear Your Uniform*; *The Story of Private Pete*, a reading filmstrip to teach a basic stock of sight words; *Introduction to Numbers*, for stressing vocabulary, relationships, and concepts; *Introduction to Language* (Parts 1 and 2), two filmstrips, one for teaching nouns and the other for presenting verbs and prepositions; and *The World*, for introducing geographic vocabulary and concepts. The Army program is fully described in *Reading in Modern Education*, Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949.

tion which have been set forth by semanticists in books, such as Hayakawa's *Language in Action*. For example, it was indicated that many important Army words were symbols for easily identifiable things or activities. Words like "gun," "drill," "flag," "flight," and "march," were part of the soldier's daily experience; they could be associated readily with familiar things or routine activity.

Certain group words were differentiated; for example, nouns like "rifle" and "barracks" were illustrated by reference to particular objects; while words such as "flags," "airplanes," and "soldiers" were shown to stand for classes or groups of objects or persons.

The teaching of abstract words such as "brave" and "freedom" received special consideration. Since the general experience of the men was broad and varied, they were encouraged to define this type of word, drawing on their own experience. Group discussion and exchange of ideas were suggested as necessary steps in clarifying the meanings of many abstract terms. Thus the work began with the names or labels for objects the men could see and touch. Useful verbs such as "eat," "walk," and "march" were also presented early in the training cycle. Demonstrations or illustrations were used as aids in deriving the meanings of these words. Other "basic" verbs as "get," "give," "have," and "be" were presented in the filmstrips devoted to verbs. Prepositions were also used with certain verbs in order to enable the student to express many ideas and yet use only a few verbs. In all this work, the aim was to provide the language tools and experience needed for successful and clear communication.

#### *Steps in Building a Silent Reading Vocabulary*

In the guide, *Instruction in Special Training Units*, the following steps in learning a word were emphasized: simple recognition, appreciation of the various meanings of a single word, and depth of understanding.

The first step dealt with the recognition of nouns, such as "chair," which can be readily associated with a particular object. The instructor was directed to relate each word to an object by pointing or by use of a picture. The instructor wrote the word on the blackboard and pronounced it several times. The students pronounced the word, identified the object for which it stood, and used the word in sentences. Flash cards were then utilized in drill to foster rapid recognition.

In the second step the student's attention was directed to the varied meanings of some nouns; for example, the student was encouraged to observe the difference between the chairs used in the classroom, in the post theater, and in the dayroom.

The third step involved the provision of varied sensory experiences to assure a full understanding of the different objects to which words refer. The handling of different kinds of chairs provided kinesthetic associations; visual associations were established by use of pictures; and in other ways additional sensory experiences were offered to sharpen the intensity of reaction and insure recall.

Several methods for helping the students obtain the meaning of new words in different contexts were presented in the guide. It was pointed out that the student might attempt to guess the meaning of the new word by examining its use in a sentence in which almost all words were familiar. For example, the new word, "chalk," might be presented in the sentence: "He writes on the blackboard with 'chalk'." In this case, the student who knew the words "write" and "blackboard" usually grasped the meaning of the new word because of its obvious relationship to familiar words.

It was recommended that examples be drawn from the student's direct experience to show the varied meanings of other words. For instance, attention of the students was directed to sentences in which words such as "serve"

and "order" were used as illustrations. Examples of these sentences follow:

The officer "serves" as captain.  
The cook "serves" the food.  
The soldier "serves" his country.  
The soldier must know his "general orders."  
The soldier is "ordered" to report.  
The barracks are in good "order."

The above general principles were presented, illustrated, and applied in the general guide. In addition, the guides designed specifically for the filmstrips treated word study and word analysis further. Attention was directed to the beginnings and endings of words, to certain vowel and consonant sounds, and to common variations in pronunciation of letter combinations, syllables, and words.

#### *Developing Special Vocabularies and Using Supplementary Materials*

Filmstrips, graphic portfolios, and other visual aids were employed to foster understanding and to promote rapid learning of special vocabularies in subjects such as *Defense Against Chemical Attack*. On the drill field, too, the giving and timing of commands were planned so that every man would comprehend fully what was required.

Supplementary reading materials offered additional reading experience of direct usefulness. For example, one booklet—*Your Job in the Army*—described the various jobs the men might enter when they completed basic training. This manual contained another special vocabulary of useful words and phrases. Visual aids in the form of attractive photographs and drawings also served to enhance or clarify the meanings of words used in this booklet. Other publications provided for vocabulary extensions. The weekly *Newsmap* (special edition for these men) contained reading matter which kept the trainees up to date on the progress of the war; at the same time it offered a valuable means of clarifying the meanings of words through the use of maps and pictures. In addition, a monthly periodical, *Our War*, contained

accounts of some outstanding leaders on the fighting front and at home.

It will be noted that this program for the Army simply applied the basically sound principles for vocabulary development which are followed in good schools. Every effort had one primary function—to promote clear, accurate communication through the correct use of words. Readability formulae were used to check some of the materials. But the larger principles of readability—involving the roles of interest, experience, and visual presentation—were applied in the development of an efficient program of instruction.

These approaches were employed with hundreds of thousands of men during World War II. Before this program was fully developed, a large number of men of limited reading ability had been taken into the Army. For these men, and as a review course for men who had completed the work in Special Training Units, another series of materials were developed. In many ways, the plan for vocabulary and language development in the *Meet Private Pete* series was similar to that used in the foregoing program. However, the vocabulary employed and the skills emphasized were those of utility to American citizens generally. One feature of this program was decidedly *different*. Photographs were used throughout the basic reader, *Meet Private Pete*, while *The Army Reader* employed drawings. It was soon evident that the photographs of actual situations fostered the reading of the incidents described in the text. The unusual value of photography impressed the writer as another element of significance in developing the readability of certain types of materials.

Since World War II, some of the foregoing procedures have been applied in the development of instructional materials for schools. Increasing consideration is being given to the interest factor; cartoon techniques are being widely used, presentations are being related

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# Language Learning Adapted To Learning Pace

MILDRED A. DAWSON<sup>1</sup>

Some years ago, as a group of us was driving home from a national convention, we were appraising what the meeting had contributed in the way of forward-looking suggestions for changes in our college curriculum. Suddenly, in the midst of a brief silence, one of the group asked, "Well, what was the word this year?" Puzzled, we could only look at one another and wait for an explanation. The speaker went on: "Haven't you noticed that every annual meeting has some catchword that you hear again and again? Each year it is different. This year I seemed to hear nothing but 'implement.' We are supposed to implement everything— school-community relationships, the facts of child development, the principles of curriculum development."

You may be sure that an interesting discussion ensued. We began to trace various movements in education through the catchwords which had come to represent them; for instance, *projects*, *units*, *centers of interest*, and — if I may come into the domain of the English Council — the *experience curriculum*, *functional grammar*, and *common learnings*.

Since that time, I have myself tried to identify the "word of the year." At Council meetings in recent years, I have been oriented in the *core curriculum*, the use of *mass media*, the *thought approach* which presumably should replace the *grammar approach* in the improvement of oral and written communication. I understand that a guest speaker at last year's meeting in Buffalo was so indoctrinated

with the concept of the "permissive atmosphere" that she has adopted the term for use in the talk which she is to give here tomorrow. And now I am about to nominate my candidate for the "word of the year" — *pacing*. Believe me, *pacing* is the coming thing.

Far be it from me to decry the importance of the educational movements for which these catchwords stand. Each represents progress toward more effective and psychologically appropriate practices in education. What does concern me is that all too often the catchwords become a familiar part of the current educational vernacular which is on every teacher's tongue, and yet the significant practices that lie back of the catchword are not adopted in our schools. How long have we been trying to persuade teachers to stress functional grammar and to reduce greatly, or to eliminate entirely, grammar in the elementary school curriculum? Despite the fact that Briggs and other leaders in the field of English teaching have shown by careful research over the past fifty years that such a revised and reduced program should take place, the typical teacher seems to demand that more grammar be taught and to select a textbook that stresses formal grammar.

Be that as it may, you and I — if we are to be up-to-date — are to pace our

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Education, Fredonia State Teachers College. This paper was read before the National Council of Teachers of English at Milwaukee, November 24, 1950.



teaching from this time forward. Luckily I believe in pacing. I only hope that you believe in it, too, and that we together can spread the gospel of pacing abroad in such a way that teachers and administrators will understand it and put pacing into actual practice.

### *The Meaning of "Pacing"*

What is meant by pacing? Watts<sup>2</sup> gives the fullest explanation which I have been able to find. He says that teachers should

grade linguistic difficulties in accordance with the principle that development is best regarded as taking place at ascending levels of ability, ranged in genetic sequences one above another. That there are levels of mental organization, hierarchal in character and complexity and successive in time, and representing qualitatively new powers which are reflected in the kind of language used for their expression, is an idea that is beginning to find support. Already we may see it exemplified in the mental advance of children as they display in turn an increasing interest in material objects and events and ability to talk about them, a sympathetic curiosity in the behavior of living organisms, an intelligent understanding of the social needs and desires of their fellows, a regard for moral principles, an appreciation of the aesthetic aspects of experience, a respect for intellectual standards and an ever-deepening spiritual insight. The acceptance of this view must mean that the progress in the mastery of language will not be a matter of simple instruction and willing response, but very largely one of natural development through the appearance of fresh insights. If we are right the teacher's task ought to be that of discovering the steps which will allow of a gradual ascent to high-level achievement and of guiding his pupils by precept and example towards it.

Gates and Jersild in their *Educational Psychology* (page 359) say that pacing consists of "carefully graduated steps in a

series of related activities" or, in terms of the pupils' learning, "essential steps in progressive mastery." Olson, probably the principal proponent of the organismic nature of child growth and development, is a strong believer in pacing. He writes as follows:

The concept of pacing as used in connection with the education of children in school is similar to the acquisition of motor control. The healthy child, full of energy and seeking behavior, is continuously observing and rehearsing. His control of the environment is confined to the things that he finds in it and is extended by the provision of new opportunities. One of the teacher's roles is to provide new experiences. Under the combined influence of inner design and practice, the child becomes ready for more and more complex integrations. The observant teacher finds an eager learner if during this period of readiness he suggests or points out a relationship. He suffers disappointment if he attempts it before. To assist these broader integrations is another of the important tasks of the teacher. A child tends to engage in any socially approved behavior within his capacity for response. The teacher gives direction to learning by approving comments to indicate what types of behavior are socially approved. This is another important role of the teacher.<sup>3</sup>

Pacing, then requires several things of the teacher. On the one hand, he must study the learner and ask himself, "Is the child mature enough to grasp this concept? Has he had experiences that provide the necessary background for learning it? Does he manifest an awakening interest in it?" In other words, is the child ready? On the other hand, the teacher must consider the

<sup>2</sup>A. G. Watts, *The Language and Mental Development of Children*, p. 24. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1944.

<sup>3</sup>Willard C. Olson, *Child Development*, p. 340. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949.

material to be learned and grade it into steps of gradually increasing difficulty and complexity. In pacing, learning is on a gradient suited to the pupil's current maturity level and his background of experiences and emerging interests, a gradient that begins with very simple and concrete activities and progresses to higher levels of understanding and appreciation, bit by bit. Never is the child forced to premature efforts to learn.

The whole concept of pacing is predicated on the principles of child growth and development. A statement of these principles will help us to see the implications which pacing has for a curricular and instructional program. In the first place, *growth is continuous*. Through natural maturation and varied experiencing, the child constantly progresses in acquiring and improving abilities and skills in every phase of his life. Secondly, *there is an orderly sequence in his learnings*. Just as the child first sits, then stands; crawls, then walks; just so does he develop in language from babblings to words, from one word sentences to complete and rounded statements, from simple declarative and interrogative sentences to compound and complex ones. Even though all children go through the same sequences in their development, *their patterns of growth are not absolutely uniform*. They grow at different rates; the order in which the various phases grow may be somewhat different even though there is usually a general similarity.

Within an individual child, *the tempo of growth is uneven*. During a period of rapid physical growth, for instance, the child may slow down in other aspects.

Such is the case when the infant is first learning to walk for, at that time, the rate of language development is very slow but it goes on apace as soon as the ability to walk has been gained. Similarly in later years, the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional phases of growth are not perfectly parallel so that the imbalance among them may cause the child to be unstable, irritable, or shy for a time. Moreover, *the rate and pattern of growth may be modified by conditions both within and outside the body*. Serious illness or malnutrition may impede certain aspects of growth; the lack of playmates, little opportunity to talk with others, or unfortunate pressures in the home are external factors which may adversely affect language development in particular.

Among the factors in the environment of a child which may affect language development are sex, number of children in the family, bilingual conditions, and socioeconomic status. To be specific, girls in their early school years are generally ahead of boys of the same age and native capacity; an only child similarly is ahead of one with siblings, whereas twins—until adolescence—tends to be slowest in language development; the use of a foreign language at home will interfere with optimal development in the use of English; and children from homes of low socioeconomic status are retarded as compared with those from better homes. (For the most part, such differences tend to disappear or at least dwindle during adolescence.) Elementary school teachers need to realize the effects of such factors so that they may try to offset them by providing enriching experiences which will encour-

age thought-freighted discussion and, thus, an advancement in language growth. For children retarded for any of these reasons, pacing needs to start at a simpler level, to deal with very concrete initial experiences, and then to progress gradually at a rate best suited to retarded learners.

*The child's total growth is a complex of interrelated phases.* Since patterns of growth vary from child to child, teachers must recognize the fact that *each child develops in his own unique way.* Thus do individual differences loom large in planning a well-adjusted school program. An understanding of these principles of child growth is bound to lead to the abandonment of the policy of grade expectancies where all pupils are supposed to make a certain amount of progress in reading, spelling, speech, and writing each year. Generally, children in any particular group cannot be expected to be ready for the same instruction at the same time; they will not progress at the same rate. So teachers need to pace their instruction in such a way that learning experiences are introduced when the child is mature and experienced enough that he is ready to interpret and assimilate what is being presented. Teachers who know the general sequences in child growth will be able to provide experiences which will help to make the most of each phase of growth and to get ready for the next one.

Undoubtedly the question in each of our minds is: How can we go about pacing our language arts instruction? How can we implement this idea? In the first place, we must take a long look at each child and determine four types of information about him. (1) We must determine just where

he is — in what stage of development in all phases of growth, but particularly in those which concern the language arts.

(2) We must note his rate of growth — his progress from stage to stage in the sequences which child psychologists have determined. (3) Likewise we must look into the quantity and quality of his experiences past, present, and future — whether rich, meager, or one-sided. (4) On the basis of the information gained through such investigation, we must define the child's current needs for guidance so that we may give his learning direction and supplement his experiences wherever gaps exist.

#### *Factors Influencing Growth*

In taking this long look at the child as we gather and interpret these four types of information, it will be necessary to consider more in detail the factors that vitally affect his growth. It is only as these factors are in our perspective that reliable and helpful programs of instruction can be planned and carried on — in other words, proper pacing can be done.

The first specific factor to be considered is the child's socioeconomic status. Havighurst, in defining the child's developmental tasks, has shown that a child born and reared in a home of low socioeconomic level tends to be retarded in language development as compared with one raised in a middle-class home where the parents are much interested in the child's speech development and tend to use language extensively in earning their livelihood. In pacing, then, the teacher must adjust to such facts by (1) accepting the child from a lower socioeconomic level without undue criticism of his low-grade

language, (2) providing a rich program of first-hand experiences which will fill gaps left by deficient home opportunities, (3) encouraging vicarious learning through the use of books and various audio-visual aids such as films and recordings, and (4) building up this child's language through encouraging him to engage in discussion of his varied school experiencing and through his imitative learning of adequate speech patterns. It seems evident that public education should reverse its rather typical policy of having the finest and best equipped schools in wealthy suburban areas. Rather, a school board should provide its choicest buildings and most abundant instructional materials in slum areas because it is the experientially impoverished child who has the greatest need of rich school living.

Second among the specific factors to be considered in pacing is sex. From birth to the age of adolescence, the girl tends to be a year or more ahead of the boy of the same age and innate capacity. One of the first applications of this fact, so far as schooling is concerned, is in the area of reading readiness. According to recent books on child development, the eyes of the young child are not ready for much close work until the age of eight, are not really mature until he is ten. At six, he may be so far-sighted that book reading is an almost impossible task. This may be particularly true of boys because of their slower rate of physiological development. First-grade teachers have told me that they have noticed that boys begin to lag behind girls rather noticeably as soon as they progress from blackboard and chart reading (or the "big books" at preprimer level) to

reading in regular-sized books. The teachers have remarked on the fact that, toward the end of the year, most of their advanced readers are girls and the slower learners, boys.

It is well known that the larger percentage of remedial reading cases are boys. Olson has shown that such boys often make a spurt in reading achievement at the age of ten or eleven, at the time when their eyes have become physiologically mature. It is possible that a properly paced program of teaching reading will postpone reading from books, which requires close use of the eyes, for those children whose eyes are obviously immature as shown by squinting, rubbing the eyes, and other evidences of eye-strain.

Sex enters into pacing in another way. Until the age of eight, there is slight difference in the interests of girls and boys; but, at this age, their interests begin to diverge. Until the time of adolescence, girls of eight or more tend to prefer the companionship of girls, and boys very definitely choose to associate with boys in their work and play. The wise teacher will take cognizance of this situation and arrange for many group activities where girls and boys are separated, there being joint committees only in areas where interests overlap. It has long been known that the selection of library books for middle-grade children should be on the basis of known differences in the interests of girls and of boys.

A third factor to be considered in pacing instruction in the language arts is a child's capacity to learn. The slow learner, for instance, requires extremely concrete



presentation, a great deal of evaluative discussion that will help him to arrive at a generalization, and much more practice and drill in the area of skills. Gifted children, on the other hand, arrive at abstractions much more quickly and are capable of deeper insights — though it must be admitted that they are often satisfied with superficial understanding unless challenged to think out the less evident relationships — and generally do not profit from extensive drill. Quick-learning pupils should have a more difficult and challenging curriculum and should be made to feel a responsibility for making contributions to their classmates through their supplementary learnings.

Perhaps enough has been said about a fourth factor: family influences. In general, the more extensive the association with adults, the more rapid is language development. Therefore, an only child is likely to be at advantage. On the other hand, twins who tend to associate extensively with one another are at the greatest disadvantage. Both of these situations may be explained by the fact that the infant and young child learn their language through imitating the speech of their associates. A totally different family influence lies in bilingualism where the learning of a foreign tongue along with English may cause interference with mastering either language with optimal ease and efficiency.

#### *The Emotional Climate*

One of the most complicated factors affecting the rate and quality of language development is the emotional atmosphere in which the child lives. If he has a sense of belonging, of being loved, of being ade-

quate to the increasing demands of day-by-day living, he is likely to make good progress in learning and using language — all other things being equal. However, a variety of conditions and influences may have a negative effect. Perhaps a child was ridiculed or made an object of amusement because his early attempts to talk were quite babyish and sounded "funny" to members of his family. On the other hand, too interested parents may have "pushed" him in learning new words and speaking them precisely, and this undue forcing may have produced a negativistic attitude toward language. The child may feel jealousy toward a brother or sister; he may have been compared unfavorably with this sibling; he may have been induced to believe that school is a place where the teacher will make him behave and keep him quiet. Any feeling of fear, insecurity, inadequacy, jealousy, being unwanted may interfere with normal development in language.

Probably the most important factor in language development is the child's getting older year by year; that is, the combined influence of maturation and experiencing is basic to language development. Vocabulary and sentence length, for example, increase as the child grows older as shown in the reviews by Anderson in the *Thirty-Eighth Yearbook*, Part II of the National Society for the Study of Education and Dora V. Smith's subsequent review in the *Forty-Third Yearbook*, Part II. In vocabulary, this is true whether we consider the more modest figures representing the speaking vocabulary or the data on words which children know and understand; for instance, 2500 words spoken by

the average six-year-old and over 17,000 understood by him as reported by Seashore. In sentence structure, too, there is an annual progression as children abandon exclusive use of the simple sentence and increasingly use the complex form. Clauses of time are first to appear and account for many of the sentence fragments that teachers in the early intermediate grades find.

Because the eight- and nine-year-old still does not fully sense the interrelationships of the ideas, he cannot yet express proper subordination. Instead, he tends to show as much relationship as he can see by using "and," "so," and "then" as connectives. Watts, on page 246, says: "Progress will be seen to consist in a growing power to hold together in the mind more and more ideas of increasing complexity and to speak of them with due regard for their relationship to one another. . . . Progress in speech also shows itself in a growing ability to tell a story with proper attention to the various time relations that exist between the events that comprise it." Watts believes that a mental age of eleven is essential before the child can reason in terms such as "If this . . . , then that . . . ." He maintains, therefore, that teachers should not endeavor to train children in clarity and precision before the latter are eleven, and says that there should not be insistence on the children's planning their communications before the age of ten or eleven. Until then, children should be encouraged to speak and write in the informal, colloquial language that comes natural to them.

The manner in which learning takes place is another consideration in pacing. According to Breckinridge and Vincent,<sup>4</sup>

Even for the six-to twelve-year-old child much learning is not a consciously thought out process. It is, rather, a casual by-product of concrete experience, an incidental activity in a world of factual living. Although the elementary school age is above all a period of rapid learning, most learning still takes place through conditioning, through chance observations, through the random experimentation which we call "trial and error," and through imitation of others. Only the more "intellectual" children learn before adolescence by intention to learn rather than by chance or by adult motivation.

Gesell notes that the seven-year-old's language reflects a growing degree of abstraction, but that he works best in delimited areas. At nine, the child likes to classify ideas as he manifests his gradually progressing ability to acquire abstract ideas through comparison and analogy. This is the time, too, that the child has acquired enough background and general acquaintance with skills that he is ready for practice; actually he enjoys drill that will help him to perfect his use of language skills. It must be remembered that the child's first contact with such skills has been in concrete situations requiring their use so that the skills have a context of meaning and purpose.

Language is, of course, a reflection of the thinking which the child is able to do. Research has shown that drill on the mechanics of speech and writing may improve the mechanical features of expression — if the child is ready for such instruction — but that such drill does not improve the non-mechanical or ideational aspects of communication. Thus abstract

<sup>4</sup>*Child Development: Physical and Psychological Growth through the School Years*, p. 399. New York: W. B. Saunders, 1943.

drill on words for the purpose of adding to the vocabulary does little to enrich or make precise the child's use of words. Watts, on pages 245 and 246, says:

Children adopt the language of grown-ups in so far as it chimes in harmoniously with their own needs. If their speech is unsatisfactory and needs to be improved they can be introduced to fresh fields of experience and helped to articulate what they think or feel about each novel impression as it arrives in terms of the language that alone can do justice to it. . . . Good teaching with older children will lead to a desire on their part to master the finer shades of difference between apparently synonymous words and phrases. . . .

Another line in linguistic advance is a growing awareness among children of the desirability of suiting their language to the specific occasions of its use.

While authorities consistently state that there are definite sequences in the various phases of child development, there is not yet available a specific listing of the sequential steps in language growth. However, I am glad to assure you that the volume on elementary school language arts which a committee of the Council is now preparing will present lists in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In considering the matter of determining each child's rate of progress

through these sequences, I have wondered how I might help teachers to see a way. A member of the Council gave me this suggestion: "When you are on a train, you can get a pretty good idea of how fast it is moving by the rate at which the telephone poles whiz by. Just so in language development. Each step in the sequence corresponds to a telephone pole; the teacher can note the comparative rate at which children progress from stage to stage."

Another practical consideration in this matter of pacing is the provision for individual differences. We well know that the normal range in achievement within a class at the upper intermediate grade level is six or seven years. There is no such thing as a justifiable grade expectancy in a child's learning to read or spell or write down his ideas. Pacing involves the adjustment of instruction in such a way as to permit each child to progress at his optimal rate. In case pacing is properly done, there will be no occasion for the remedial instruction that is now necessary because children are pushed and forced beyond their current capacity to learn. Pacing spells greater success in school learning.

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### IMPROVING READABILITY

(Continued from Page 401)

closely to children's experience; vocabulary development and concept building are receiving primary consideration; and filmstrips and films are assuming a rightful place as an essential part of instructional programs. These approaches,

as well as the judicious application of formulae, constitute a step forward in the improvement of materials designed to promote competency and satisfaction in reading.

# Creative Poetry in the Primary Grades

ANN DUBBE<sup>1</sup>

'Twas the week before Christmas when twenty-four anxious seven-year-olds were comfortably seated on the floor, in full view of the Christmas tree which they had just finished decorating.

"It's beautifully decorated," observed Miss X. "And now what would you like to have Santa Claus put beneath the tree?"

The timely, casual question was all that was needed to start a flow of conversation.

"A sled," piped one voice.

"I'd like skis," said another.

"Yes, and I'd like an electric train that whistles, too."

All of the girls announced that they would like dolls. In this manner the conversation continued until Netito decided he couldn't think any more and after all, Stanta Claus might have some ideas, too.

Miss X. looked quizzically as she asked, "What would you do with your sled, Roger?"



What a stupid question, he must have thought as he quickly responded, "Take slides down my hill."

"And what would you do with your bike, Carl?"

"I'd take rides with it. Sure I would!"

"Slides, rides," exclaimed Nancy. "Miss X., those words rhyme."

"So they do," replied Miss X. "I wonder if we might not put all of our wishes to Santa in rhyme."

"A sled that slides,  
A bike that rides."

Thus the children and teacher proceeded until the poem was completed. How delighted the children were when a few days later their cooperative poem, which follows, was published in *The Star*, the Campus School paper.

What We Want for Christmas

A sled that slides,  
A bike that rides,  
A rain that runs and whistles,  
A wagon that rolls,  
Skiis with poles,  
Dolls to hug and cuddle.  
Cowboy boots, cowboy suits,  
Weaving sets and needles,  
A movie ring,  
Fit for a king,  
Cash registers that jingle,  
Record players and records, too,  
And anything else dear Santa Claus  
We'll leave it up to you.

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# Poetry Broadside

LORRENE LOVE ORT<sup>1</sup>

The twentieth-century child accepts and enjoys pictorial billboards which advertise familiar things—cars, breakfast cereals, and soap! He likes the broad sweep of words and pictures; he likes the clarity, the graphicness. Therefore, when poetry is blown-up to a broadside proportion, many children have a more familiar feeling with it, for size alone sometimes acts as a common denominator. In the magnifying, poetry loses its "ivory-tower" facade, and it assumes a simpler demeanor. But just what is a poetry broadside? It is really nothing but a poem grown "to man's estate"—a poem lettered or written on a large sheet of paper or on a cardboard of poster dimensions. The poem may or may not be illustrated. Sometimes the lettering and hue of the paper complete the art form. Often, illustrations are added to heighten the enjoyment. The completed broadside is placed, as is a picture, at eye-level where it may be enjoyed, for this is a picture which may be seen, spoken, heard, and touched. It is poetry for all.

Lest that echoing wail of "But I'm all thumbs at art!" be heard, let it be known that poetry broadsides take no special art talent. Some commercial poetry broadsides may be purchased, but most poetry broadsides are individually made. The elementary teacher who uses manuscript writing so effectively can easily pen a poem, and there are often lovely and very suitable drawings available in magazines, newspapers, and in travel folders—yours for the looking! Nor does it take any

special talent to find a leaf and trace its outline on a sheet of copper or bronze metallic paper. Yet, bright fall can be easily captured by a poet's words and a few such wind-blown leaves sifting downward on a sheet of golden cardboard.

Carl Sandburg's poem, "Fog," can be so easily illustrated by merely pressing a willing pussy's inky paw here and there on a softly faded grey-blue paper. Hard? Only if the pussy makes it so!

Then there is the sewing scrap-box. Do tease out the gayest red calico and a bold gingham. Unriddle them into your friends of childhood, and any compass and a few brush strokes can yield a Chinese plate. Perhaps a few shreds of tangled calico and gingham in a bottom corner can effectively suggest the sad fate of those antagonistic two!

A bottle of gold ink, a large sun reminiscent of first-grade days, and a crimson cardboard will create the essence of Vachel Lindsay's, "An Indian Summer Day On the Prairie."

Snow poems are always delightful to illustrate. Anyone can cut dainty white paper snowflakes, and, if the one in a million finds it impossible, there is always the inexpensive paper doily with its fragile flake designs.

Finger-painting, fusions, wire and ribbon designs, dimensional figures of pipe-cleaners, cork, and felt all make unusual 'Teacher in the Napoleon, Ohio, Elementary School.

illustrations, and there are hundreds of ideas just waiting to be used—waiting for you. To be sure, the illustrations, the lettering, and the color of ink and paper must all make a harmonious setting for the poem selected, but personal discretion and taste will have to be exercised here.

The teacher planning to introduce cursive writing could very effectively do so by penning a poetry broadside in graceful letters. Children take pride in "teacher-made" objects. Let them feel pride in your artistry.

Since the word "broadside" suggests any wide expanse, why not use the chalkboard, too? Well, why not indeed! Maybe by the time the teacher has released himself to this extent he'll find that the children have suggested that they join this wonderful adventure, too. So with chalk in hand, a class venture starts, but how it snowballs! If the teacher's enthusiasm is genuine, poems by the bevy will probably start coming to school to be shared and enjoyed by the entire group. Before anyone realizes what is happening, the eye-appeal of poetry broadsides may have won poetry a social place in the classroom, for when children are in the daily presence of beauty at least a little rubs off onto their own personalities. Thus, the creation of a taste for poetry may be furthered, and once poetry finds its mark, how few can reject it?

Perhaps one of the finest contributions that poetry broadsides can offer is the harmonious integrating possibilities with other areas—art, music, language, science, history, geography, and many others.

The science corner may suggest a poem suitable to place above the turtle en-

closure, and Emily Dickinson's poem about the snake might even remove, at least partially, the fear of the most timorous child. There are countless poems suitable to place near a reading table, and the gift of a seashell, that mystery of childhood, is valid reason for an accompanying poetry broadside. To commence with poetry is to set in motion a whole galaxy of poems.

In a literature class imbued with the thought of spring, the children and the teacher worked together to create a thirty-foot poetry broadside of class-selected poems, about fifteen in all. On either end were accompanying murals, and a spring fabric enhanced a poem in the middle. All this was created on brown wrapping paper. The other materials used were: tempera, a few inexpensive brushes, lettering pens, and India ink. The cost was very nominal, but the enjoyment was exorbitant. The children worked during free periods when other lessons were finished, and although spring came slowly that year it came early in that classroom. Those children had as their own not only poetry by the page, but poetry by the yard, and they reveled in it, too.

But combine poetry, art, and music, and then listen to the "oh's" and "ah's." Try some of the old English songs whose picturesque words are so colorful and whose tunes are so singable. "The Twelve Days of Christmas" or "Sumer Is I-cumen In" are very adaptable. At Christmas-time, the carols, the art, and the pageantry of the middle-ages seem to go hand in glove to create a tapestry-like poetry broadside. Such a one just might lead into or out-of a social studies project.

The next natural sequence is to make a broadside of the children's own poetry. Not all will try, maybe, but don't be surprised at the ones who do, and they will be encouraged if the teacher will try too.

It is fascinating to make poetry broad-

sides, but even more fascinating are the results. By removing the prosaic from poetry presentation and by substituting creativity in its place, poetry can have the charm and color that the minstrel first gave it.

## Helping Children to Write

VERA S. FORREST<sup>1</sup>

Many of us have felt for a long time that it is difficult to get children to express their thoughts in writing. So often children will say, "But I have nothing to write about." We know that children do have ideas to express, that they are continually thinking about the things that interest them and that they are always planning things to do. It would seem that if children realize that their thoughts are important and that their own thoughts are unique, they will feel free to express themselves.

A child needs to feel that what he writes is important. He needs to be encouraged. If his story is copied and printed on a large piece of paper where he and his classmates can read it he will want to write again. Having a large chart in the room where each child keeps a record of his stories or poems helps to stimulate an interest in writing. This chart can be changed each month. The children like to take turns illustrating this according to the month or season of the year.

A teacher needs to be sensitive to the remarks of children as they talk between bells or during school. It means jotting down, from time to time, any idea that might make a good story or poem. Then some time later if Johnny says, "I can't

think of anything to write," we can be ready with, "Do you remember what you told me about pretending when you were alone the other afternoon?" Usually, Johnny will get busy and soon have another story ready.

One rainy afternoon in early fall a little girl called out, "Oh, look at the raindrops on top of your car. They look like little birds hopping about." I wondered then just what thoughts the others in the group might have concerning the raindrops, so before dismissal we spent a few minutes discussing the rain.

Such remarks as these were made:

Raindrops are like little balls bouncing along on the sidewalk.

They are like little fairies skipping to school.

Sometimes they seem to be playing catch as they slide down the windows.

They bounce like ping-pong balls.

They seem to be dancing together.

At night they dance in circles around the car lights.

These thoughts were printed on a large chart, above which was placed a painting of a little girl under an umbrella.

Another day a child said, "When I

<sup>1</sup>Second and third grade teacher in the Fremont School, Battle Creek, Michigan.

look into a mirror I wonder if I really look the way the mirror makes me look." This made me wonder how other children felt about mirrors and after discussing that subject one day, we listed "Fun With Mirrors" as a title for another group of stories. When eight stories had been put in the folder for "mirror stories," they were made into a book which was illustrated by the children and placed on the library table. Such thoughts as,

Funny mirrors, I wonder what they do to us?

You look at them. Maybe it is not you;  
Maybe it's someone looking at you.

or:

When I look into the mirror I wonder if I really am myself, but when I look at my mother and daddy when they are near the mirror they look the same as when I saw them in the mirror, so I must look the same in the mirror as I do to other people.

were included in this book.

It is never difficult to get children to write about the fun that they have in the fall. Experience stories come easily but when someone writes about a leaf in this fashion,

There comes a little fairy,  
Dancing through the sky,  
With her little eyes rolling around,  
To look at the sun.

it seems a bit unusual, or,

Autumn leaves are falling,  
Falling, falling so,  
And as they float down  
They seem to say,  
'Tip-toe, tip-toe, tip-toe'  
As on their crimson toes  
They go whirling and whirling.  
or,  
Little red faces  
Peep through the green leaves,  
As much as to say  
'How do you do today.'

Children enjoy writing about the snow

and the fun they have in the winter. A child who enjoys stories about fairies wrote,

The fairies ride on the snowflakes. They tell you something soft and low.  
They tell you that they are the fairies.  
That's how you know. I don't know whether the fairies tell other people, too.  
They say it so softly.

We can be sure that a child who writes,

The little frosty stars are blinking up in the sky. They look so pretty with frosty points; they seem to say, 'go to sleep, go to sleep.'

is a child who feels secure.

When the snowflakes hit the car windows, a child said, "Don't run over the fairies, Daddy," and he said, "O. K." "When we got home the fairies were asleep." We know that that child is understood.

One child said,

Peace and quiet is nice to have,  
The little snowflakes are like that,  
Little snowflakes come softly down, down,  
Peaceful, peaceful snowflakes.

A quiet, friendly atmosphere is necessary if we want to help children to write. We must be free to listen to them as they come in, full of ideas to express. Many children will write their thoughts as soon as they come in the room in the morning. For as one little girl said, "I must write my thoughts before I lose them."

Children will need some help with spelling, occasionally. They will, also, at first, need help with arranging their work on their papers. If each child has his own word book, made early in the fall, he can record the words he needs as he writes. This helps him to become more independent in his work.



Another way to stimulate children's thinking is to ask them what they think about before they go to sleep at night. It is amazing what children will write for a book entitled "When the Sandman Comes." When fourteen stories had been put in the folder we made another book. There were such titles as, "The Lady with the Velvet Blanket," "Adventures with the Fairies," and "My Teddy Bear and I."

Children enjoy talking about the toys they take to bed with them. They will write about them, also; stories about stuffed cats, dogs, teddy bears, barn dance dolls, and many other toys.

Sometimes it takes only one word to give the children a word picture which will lead them into writing a story. Some of the nicest stories I have ever received from children were written after giving them just one word—the word "cozy." I learned so much about my group from reading their thoughts about "coziness" or a "cozy feeling." One child said, "On Sunday nights we eat supper in front of the fireplace, when the fire burns low," and one said, "I feel cozy when I climb into my daddy's bed and get real close to him. Sometimes I feel real sorry for the flowers. But, really, the snow is a blanket for them. Everyone is cozy if they have a home," or,

The fairies feel cozy,  
Snuggling in their beds,  
While beautiful dreams  
Dance through their heads.

"A whole family sitting around a fire eating pop-corn from big bowls," is the way one child expressed her idea of coziness.

Children's thinking may also be stimulated by suggesting a certain color like "blue."

In order to help children to become more observing as well as to help them with writing their thoughts, I have asked them to write about a lovely sight they have noticed. In February we wrote short stories and put them on a chart on which was printed "What Lovely Thing Have You Seen Lately?" One child wrote about watching the sunrise as he rode to school. He said, "It was red and orange. It made the snow sparkle." Another child said, "I saw a dark blue house. It looked like blue velvet against the white snow." "A black dog looked very black walking in the white snow," wrote one little girl, or "A bright red cardinal eating seeds from a snowy feeding station." "When we went to church the trees bent over with snow. It seemed as if we went through a tunnel."

Children like to write about things they like to hear or touch or smell. Sense impressions are so important to children, but unless we get them to express themselves along these lines we never get to really know them.

One day after hearing a child say, "I feel so happy today. I feel like singing" I asked the group what things made them feel happy, or made them hum little tunes. This started another book called "When We Hum a Little Tune." In that book I found this poem:

I hum a little tune,  
Everytime I work and play  
And gray clouds float about  
But none float my tune away,  
I wonder what other tunes  
There are to sing;  
Maybe I can hum a tune  
About the lovely spring.

One peppy little fellow said, "It doesn't really matter what my tune is as long as it has lots of bounce."

Just ask a group about their experiences as a cook and they will be anxious to tell you about the time they had fun cooking or baking or getting ready for a picnic.

Not long ago I happened to hear a child say, "I couldn't go to choir practice last night, so, when I took my bath I pretended that the bubbles were a piano and I played and sang in the tub." I jotted that down for another idea, and later I got some excellent stories that really surprised me. I found such expressions as "a princess floating on thousands of diamonds of bubbles," "the bubble festival," "a soapy snow-man," "a formal made of soap suds with a wash cloth for a mink coat," and "little white rose buds."

Writing the script for puppet shows makes a good incentive for writing. Children enjoy working in committees and can work out interesting programs to share with the group.

Together as a whole room, we worked on a spring program, using pixies as a theme. The children began looking through poetry books for poems that told about brownies, fairies, or pixies. They had already learned Aileen Fisher's "April Music" and had used "Please" by Rose Fyleman and "Fairy Shoes" by Annette Wynne in choral speaking work. They began writing about pixies and flowers. Some wrote about how flowers would appear to a pixie. These rhymes were used in the first scene of our play "In the Deep Woods."

When the children came, in the second scene, and the pixies left, they gave poems that they had memorized in the choral

speaking work and also gave many of the poems and songs that they had made up.

Children enjoy making up little songs. I asked them to keep a record of their songs. We had a folder for these, also. There were songs about the circus, cowboys, pixies, spring and flowers, spring rain, sunshine, the parade, happiness, or anything that a child feels deeply about.

This spring we frequently had pansies in the room. I called attention to them, to the colors and softness of the petals. I found these two rhymes on my desk one week:

#### *Pansies*

Pansies are sweet and soft and small,  
No one would hurt them, not at all,  
I felt them and said to myself,  
'How sweet you are,  
You dear little things.'

#### *The Pansy*

The pansy feels so soft and smooth,  
It is so light and fluffy,  
It looks so nice,  
With it's purple face,  
And it feels so puffy wuffy.

Children use words that express sound. They like the repetition of words.

I write about my fun,  
Bing-bang-bing-bang-  
I have so much fun. or

Type, type, goes the noisy typewriter, the noisy typewriter.

A quiet library, with books to read,  
With books to read.

Here comes the bunny - hop, hop, hop,  
Here comes the rabbit - clop, clop, clop.

April rain goes pitter-patter,  
Pitter-patter, on my window.

It is surprising what ideas children have for titles of stories or books. They like to choose their own; they enjoy illustrating their stories, too.

(Continued on Page 441)

# Books on Family Relationships for First Grade

LEONA DICKEY<sup>1</sup>

[Books with one star are for the teacher's use only. Two-star books the pupils can read. The books not starred are to be read by the teacher and used as picture books by the pupils.]

## *The Whole Family*

Abel, Ruth and Ray. *The New Sitter*

New York, Oxford University Press, 1950  
Molly and Tim's parents want to go out, so they get a sitter.

The children wonder what she will be like—fat, tall, laughing, frowning.

She comes, talks to the family, plays games with the children, reads them a story, and helps them get ready for bed. Interestingly told. Some colored pictures but not attractive.

Developmental value: Acceptance of sitters. Children can have fun when daddy and mama go away for awhile.

Clymer, Eleanor. *Here Comes Pete*\*

McBride, 1944, \$2.25

Pete age five moves to the suburbs and makes new friends including a little boy, a goat, the baker, the vegetable man. Peter's circle of friends grows constantly greater. His parents are inwardly pleased but on many occasions pleasantly surprised. So interestingly told that this loveable little boy lives in the minds of the listeners.

Developmental value: Wholesome, happy, and well adjusted family living.

Hanna, Paul R., Hoyt, Genevieve Anderson. *Peter's Family*\*\*

Chicago, Scott Foresman, 1944

Collection of stories of a family that has a new baby and therefore need more room in their home. They buy a new house and furnish it. There are stories of family work, family fun, and a visit to grandfather's farm. Attractive colorful pictures, chil-

dren's conversations in textbook expressions.

Developmental value: Wholesome home living. A good supplementary reader.

Keeler, Katherine Southwick. *Dog Days*\*

New York, Thomas Nelson, 1944, \$1.50

Summer in the country. The family stay on the farm and daddy goes into town in the morning. Evenings he spends a lot of time in the garden. The Tucker children had everything they wanted in the country except a dog. Their endless question was, "When will we get our dog?" Through a series of fortunate accidents they acquired three. The author has captured the insistence of children about something they want in a very charming manner.

Developmental value: Concept of desires of other children. Lots of times parents just don't understand what children really want, and give them lots of things they think children want.

MacGregor, Ellen. *Tommy and the Telephone*  
Chicago, Albert Whitman Co., \$1.25

Everyone receives telephone calls except Tommy. Everytime the telephone rings, no matter where Tommy is—the store, at the barber shop, fire station, Tommy asks, "Is somebody calling me?" His mother and Aunt Mildred fix it up for Tommy to get a call. Interesting repetitions. Pictures colorful and attractive. Manuscript print.

Developmental value: Families understand little children's feelings and try to fix things right.

<sup>1</sup>Primary teacher in the South Side School, Champaign, Ill. This annotated list was compiled in the summer session class of Prof. Leonard S. Kenworthy at the University of Illinois.

Mason, Miriam, *Home is Fun\*\**

Chicago, Beckley-Cardy, 1939

Collection of stories of buying, building, furnishing, and living in a new home because the family grew too big for the other house. Some values of growing, helping, sharing, and saving are introduced. Pictures colorful and realistic. Help to carry the story. Definitely middle class niceties. Textbook style.

Developmental values: Understandings of how and why we live in the houses we live in and of the daily activities of an average sized family.

Mitchell, Lucy Sprague. *Fix it Please*

New York, Simon and Schuster, 1947, 78c. (A Little Golden Book)

Polly and Jimmy were constantly popping off buttons, breaking things, tearing up their toys. Daddy and mother could always fix them. Mother called the doctor to fix them when they were ill. Language used very expressive of the mood of the story. The pictures are delightful and colorful. They carry the story.

Developmental value: Mother and daddy do a lot for us.

Whitehead, Roberta. *Five and Ten\*\**

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943

A trip of a little four year old girl to the five and ten with her family to spend her birthday pennies. The suspense of Molly's indecision keeps the curiosity aroused. Repetition of sentences, print, and vocabulary good for pupil use. Pictures colorful but not appealing.

Developmental value: Help children to understand that there are times when they need to make their own decisions.

### *Mother and Child*

Reyher, Rebecca. *My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World\**

Howell, Soskin, 1945

A 6 year old Russian girl went every day to the wheat fields with her mother and father. One day she went into the uncut wheat to get out of the hot sun and went to sleep. When she awoke her parents were nowhere in sight, she ran looking for them everywhere, and finally managed to sob out to some villagers, "My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World." Her mother was almost toothless, had small eyes, a big nose, was heavy and broad, but to the child she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

Developmental value: True sense of values. Devotion to mother. Some people see with their eyes alone, others see with their hearts too.

Wooley, Catherine. *David's Railroad\**

New York, Morrow, 1949, \$2.00

David neglects his chores because he is obsessed with his train. He gets into scrapes, doesn't come home from school, plays he is ill (turns out to be on a Saturday when there is no school), pelts people on the sidewalk with acorns. His train is locked up from him. After having to clean off the paint he smeared the kitchen with, he gets himself straightened out. It is so realistic and captivating the children will identify themselves with David immediately.

Developmental value: Shows how one may change his actions and be happier for the change. Very, very good.

### *Father and Child*

Reim, Jerrold, Crichlow, Ernest. *Twelve O'clock Whistle\**

New York, William Morrow, 1946

Father works in an automobile factory testing cars. Mitch thought he made the cars all by himself till one day when father forgot his lunch and Mitch took it to him. The guard took Mitch on a tour



through the plant so that he saw the assembly lines and realized one man didn't make a car. He was reconciled when Father took him for a ride in the car and let him tighten the screw on the windshield wiper. Lively story. Pictures expressive of the mood and colorful. Developmental value: Father understanding of little boy's hero worship.

Misch, Robert Jay. *At Daddy's Office*  
New York, Knopf, 1946, \$1.50

Good time Mary had exploring daddy's office. She saw his desk with the telephone, letters, and even a picture of herself and her mother. She rode in the elevator, typed her name on the typewriter, saw the switchboard, had a drink from the funny waterbottle, and ate dinner in a restaurant with her daddy. Pictures are colorful and give good closeup view of the things that Mary saw.

Developmental value: Satisfies curiosity of what daddy does all day when he is away. Develops an appreciation of his work.

### *Older Brother and Sister and Friends*

Bannon, Laura. *Big Brother*

Chicago, Albert Whitman, 1950

Sally and Dick were sailing a homemade boat with Sally's doll on it in shallow water when a whirlwind whiffed it out of reach. Dick finally managed to get the doll for Sally without the doll getting wet. Pictures very colorful and expressive. Manuscript print. Sequence intriguing and humorous.

Developmental value: Big brothers can do things for little sisters.

Hogan, Inez. *Nappy is a Cowboy*

New York, E. P. Dutton and Co., 1949

Nappy pretends he is a cowboy and Spike is an Indian. They play a little girl is a cow and rope her. A little boy plays he is a bandit and a fight ensues when the

cowboy and Indian capture him. Nappy's older sister saves the day by inviting them in to dinner. Interesting child lingo, pictures help to make this imagination real. Developmental value: Appreciation of an older sister. They sometimes do things besides boss you.

Lister, Marion. *Big Brother and Little Brother*  
New York, Rinehart and Co., 1946.

Tells of the doings of the brothers in the big brother's own words. It appeals to first graders because these are exactly the kind of stories that they tell. The print is manuscript rather than printing with lots of the words in capitals, which is typical of the child at this age. The black, blue, and red color of the manuscript will please them too. Illustrations are clear-cut, simple, colorful sketches. Developmental value: Good attitudes toward brothers and sisters.

### *New Baby*

Frankl, Liselotte. *Peter and His New Brother*  
New York, Chanticlear Press, 1949

Peter wanted a playmate and was informed he was going to have a new baby at his house. He soon found out the baby couldn't play with him and usually cried or was hungry when his mother was playing with Peter. Not long after his first birthday Steven began to be a real playmate to Peter. Well told. Pictures colorful and life-like.

Developmental value: Prepares a child for the coming of a new baby and the acceptance of it once it has arrived.

McKean, Ilse. *David's Bad Day*

New York, Shady Hill Press, 1949

David feels unloved, left out, feeling hurt, rejected when his baby brother seems to him to get all the attention. He refuses to eat lunch, wants a bottle, pulls the baby's leg, breaks the baby's toy, and goes to bed sobbing, yelling, and kicking. The

parents figure out from his story the cause of his behavior, so they start doing more things with him. He gets to feed the baby and help diaper him. They give him special time (reading stories, playing with him and even take him on a picnic and leave the baby at home.) Interesting and very real. Good photographic illustrations. Developmental value: Helps children to understand that other children have the same kind of feelings as they, and that bad days can be accepted, understood, and worked through. This will help everybody to be happier.

Wasson, Valentina, P. *The Chosen Baby*\*  
Philadelphia, Lippincott Co., 1950, Revised Edition

Mr. and Mrs. Brown, married for many years, decided to adopt a baby. They called the lady who helps people adopt babies, and she asked lots of questions. She came to see what kind of home they had and where the baby would sleep. After waiting a long time, they got Peter. They had wonderful times together watching him grow, walk, and talk. They decided to adopt a sister for Peter to play with and Peter was very happy with her. Developmental value: Wonderful for explaining adoptions.

Zolotow, Charlotte. *But Not Billy*  
New York, 1947, Harper and Brothers

The spontaneous actions of a new baby are portrayed so vividly through the story and pictures that the children will just love Billy when he finally stands up and says Mmm m m m Ma Ma. The illustrations are most appropriate and are so real looking as to appear to be photographs. The repetition of "But not Billy" is especially appealing.

Developmental value: Good feelings toward babies.

### *Play: What Children Do All Day*

Becky, Tall Enough Tommy

Chicago, Children's Press Inc., \$1.00

Tommy was just right for the slide, the swing, his tricycle, and the merry-go-round. When a new turning bar went up at the playground, Tommy couldn't reach it to skin-the-cat. His friends helped him, and Tommy decided "It's just right to have good friends." Pictures are colorful and carry the ideas of the story. Conversational text and manuscript print.

Developmental value: Friends sense your troubles and want to help you.

Beim, Lorraine. *Benjamin Busy Body*

New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1947

Benjamin's busy day started by his brushing his teeth while mother and daddy were ready for breakfast. All day long he was busy at something when mother called him. In the evening when daddy called Benjamin to bring his slippers, mother and daddy looked for him and found him asleep in bed. Just enough teasing, affection and suspense to be charming. Colorful, attractive pictures.

Developmental value: Happy, healthful, helpful little children are busy all day long at something.

Leaf, Munro. *Boo Who Used to be Scared of the Dark*

New York, Random House, 1948

Boo was scared of so many things, snakes, bugs, dogs, and thunderstorms, but worst of all the dark. Alexander, the cat, showed Boo how silly it was to go around being scared. Lovely illustrations in color and charmingly told.

Developmental value: Help children to see they can solve some of their own problems.

Scholat, G. Warren Jr. *Play Time for You*

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950

All kinds of things a child can do alone or with other children. All the activities are simple, easy to follow, and use materials usually found in the average home. Pictures showing how to follow the instructions.

Developmental value: Help children find constructive things to do in their spare time.

Whitehead, Roberta. *Peter Opens the Door*

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1946

Peter woke up one morning before mother and daddy. He wished for a little boy to

whisper to and play with in his room. Then he remembered that today mother had promised a surprise when the doorbell rang. The doorbell rang several times, but it was only the postman, the laundry man, and the trashman. When Peter could hardly wait any longer, the doorbell rang again—and this time it was a surprise, a playmate for Peter. Pictures show lots of action and color. The words denoting sound keep you in suspense throughout the story. Developmental value: Children like to have other children to play with.

## Shall We Require Boys and Girls to Learn Poetry?

RACHEL PALM<sup>1</sup>

"Do we *have* to learn poems?" my students ask in September, even before I have mentioned the word poetry. From their tone of voice I decide they are one more group that has had sad experience with the learning of poetry. Perhaps they too have seen no reason for memorizing a required number of poems each year from a teacher selected list or "course of study."

I am discarding my list and breaking the rules of requirement for the number learned. My future assignment is to help boys and girls to learn to like poetry.

A small classroom success helped me to decide on one method of working with poetry. A very mischievous young man in one class responded nobly to choral speaking. He actually expressed his like for it by asking to read poems day after day, and often became the well-behaved and respected leader. To begin with the class used poems like "Jonathan Bing." Later

I was able to introduce others like "O Captain My Captain" and "America for Me." Memorization comes unconsciously with an expression not to be had by the other method of assignment.

Why not try a poetry speaking contest where each may choose his own selection? Here there is purpose for learning. Let the group decide who is best. Let them decide on what points their decisions shall be based.

If they are to learn poetry, let them choose the poems or passages they like. Let them memorize with a purpose more than merely memorizing poems long enough to say them to the teacher who marks a grade in the grade book with the satisfaction that she also has completed her assignment.

<sup>1</sup>A teacher in Batavia, Ill. This article was written in a summer session class at Northern Illinois State Teachers College, DeKalb.

# Look and Listen

Edited by RAOUL R. HAAS<sup>1</sup>

It is, perhaps, more than ever necessary, as attacks on our schools mount, that the public relations program be given serious consideration. This is true not only in those cities which have already known unfavorable publicity, but for all schools and school systems wishing to foster greater interest and support from the public. The radio has been long used as a medium for educational programs designed for in-school listening. This is well. But it is hoped that programs with possibly a wider public appeal will be made available for the general listener.

Programs interpreting the work of the schools have strong appeal. They have high listener value despite protests to the contrary by commercial broadcasters. A number of schools are succeeding in interesting the community through such programs. "Know Your Campus School," for example, which was broadcast through the facilities of the Iowa State Teachers College station, is one of these. This program was designed to acquaint the community with the type of work being done in the laboratory school and was not intended as an educational program for use in classrooms.

As programs of this nature grow in popularity, as it is to be hoped they will, classroom teachers will be called upon increasingly to provide material for such broadcasts. Actually, this is desirable for teachers in the long view. Also, here is an opportunity to provide valuable experiences for the students.

Objections on the part of teachers to such an additional burden most probably would in-

clude protestations of ignorance of program construction. The teacher's conviction that that which is being done in the class would have little interest to the general listener may also be present. It is our experience that any activity may be made attractive to adults. The interest in schools on the part of parents and others is traditionally high. If a classroom experience is worthwhile it may undoubtedly serve as material for a public relations broadcast.

To guide teachers in the preparation of this type of radio program, a 15-minute script which has been done on the air but not previously published, is offered for study and adaptation. Written by the editor of "Look and Listen," this program was designed to entertain, yes, but this was not its only value. More important, it is believed, was its delineation of the scope of the subject area involved and its demonstration that definite, positive goals were being set for the work of the class and were actually being achieved by the students.

Technically, the program was done on tape rather than "live." As the dialogue shows, the pupils' material had been taped as part of a unit on radio. Those sections of the students' recording which were employed in the broadcast were spliced into the tape done by the writer and Miss Jean Cole and Mr. John F. Nelson, formerly student teachers at the Iowa State Teachers College laboratory school.

Schools desiring to make known their work to a larger audience might well discuss the possibility of a weekly or monthly program with the manager of their local radio stations. It will be necessary, in all probability, to work with the program director and continuity writer for a time to know the special requirements and limitations involved in broadcasting in the

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Haas is Director, the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College.

<sup>2</sup>See "The Public School Crisis," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Sept. 8, 1951.



public domain. Additional assistance for the preparation of such programs may be secured through state colleges and universities where broadcasting stations are part of the campus activities. Frequently extension departments or the departments of speech at these institutions are in a position to offer assistance and guidance in the development of a school's public relations broadcasts.

As educators we have decried the quality of commercial broadcasting. Here is a challenge which we should meet as one step in the improvement of radio programs. Also, and this is very important, here is a means of enlisting the support of the communities at large in the cause of education.

#### KNOW YOUR CAMPUS SCHOOL

SOUND:—(Taped commercial)

Honeybunch, Honeybunch,  
The candy bar with lots of *crunch*.  
Sweet and mellow, like a fellow,  
With that tantalizing *crunch*.  
Etc.

NELSON: (LAUGHING)

Well, they certainly got the feel of the commercial in that one!

COLE: Yes, I think they did.

HAAS: I especially liked the emphasis on *crunch*! What was the purpose, Miss Cole, of the commercial?

COLE: The senior speech class at Teachers College High School has been doing a radio unit. The group, after listening to and analyzing many types of broadcasts, decided that they would like to write a dramatic program of their own. Why they chose so morbid a theme as the suicide of a famous artist, I don't know. But it appears that the majority of commercial shows listened to by the students and their families are of this type. Of course, no radio program would be complete without a commercial, and the singing commercial,

particularly, captured the fancy of our students. Once the show was written and the commercial decided upon, we made a tape recording of the complete show — sound effects and all — and used the tape for purposes of analysis.

NELSON: What is the name of the show your students wrote?

COLE: We called it "The Hand of Fate," but when it was decided to use "Dance Macabre" for the theme music, we changed it to "The Dance of Death."

HAAS: I understand, Mr. Nelson, that your students have produced a radio show, too. Is yours of the dramatic type, also?

NELSON: Yes, it is. When we first began the unit on radio speaking we made a careful study of newscasts and commentators. The students prepared their own newscasts from the columns of the school paper and simulated a broadcast of these to the rest of the class.

HAAS: I thought it quite successful to set up the microphone in an adjoining classroom and to have the students hear only the voice of the speaker. Just what were you trying to achieve through such a teaching device?

NELSON: We were most concerned with the development of a pleasant speaking voice and good enunciation. The students rated each other by means of a check sheet. Amazingly enough, there was a high correlation between their ranking and ours.

HAAS: In other words, the radio unit was designed to assist the students develop pleasant and effective speaking voices?

COLE: Yes, but there were further objectives. The power of the radio in mass communication is well known. We tried to help the students become more discriminating listeners. The production of a radio show was

important only in that it lent itself to a closer appreciation of the amount of work that goes into the production of the commercial program — the research into locale, the complicated sound effects, and the need for historical accuracy — and also to develop greater discrimination in the choosing of good radio programs.

HAAS: Do you feel that you succeeded in raising the standards of radio program choice on the part of students?

NELSON: I'm not certain, but it appears that the students are more nearly able to detect a worthwhile from a cheap show. For example, in both Miss Cole's show and in mine, much of the writing of dramatic effects was done with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. I think the fact that the students are able to laugh at that which is of little consequence is a sign that they are on the way to demanding more desirable and intelligent programs.

HAAS: It would appear that way to me. The commercial we just listened to indicates that students are not being taken in by many of the vicious advertising schemes which are broadcast daily — every hour on the quarter hour! How did the students obtain the scripts for their shows?

COLE: The shows were entirely original with the members of the class. They were written by individual members of the class and then each scene was fitted into the continuity and musical or narrative bridges were added by the entire group as needed. I felt that one of the most important outcomes of the activity arose in terms of the need for clear and forceful writing. Punctuation, spelling, sentence structure and proper paragraphing became of great importance to all the students in order that they might communicate their dramatic idea clearly to the listeners. It shouldn't be forgotten that the students were learn-

ing to work together throughout the entire unit.

HAAS: In other words, the writing of the script provided a life-like situation for learning proper grammatical structure, punctuation, and intelligent usage since the students knew they would be judged on the basis of how well they were able to put their ideas across?

NELSON: Exactly.

HAAS: The working together of the students is a most desirable outcome, Miss Cole. Only by such cooperation within the school can we insure continuing democracy in this country. Would you mind playing a part of the script for Mr. Nelson and me?

COLE: I should be glad for your evaluation.

SOUND:—(CLICK, AS TAPE RECORDER IS TURNED ON; PUSHING BUTTONS, ETC.)

MISS MOORE: *Good evening, Miss Carter. How did you like Mr. Lovelace's latest book?*

MISS CARTER: *Well, I haven't finished it yet, but I simply had to stop in to see why the lights have been on after closing hours lately. I thought the library closed at nine. Have you been working late, Miss Moore?*

MISS MOORE: *No, but Mr. Val has been working on his painting.*

MISS CARTER: *Oh! Why is he working so late at night?*

MISS MOORE: *Well, I really shouldn't tell you this, but. . .*

MISS CARTER: (SHOCKED) *Oh. I won't breathe it to a soul.*

MISS MOORE: *Mr. Everett, the chairman of the Citizens Committee told me the other day that a bonus has been offered to Mr. Val if the painting is finished in another month.*

MISS CARTER: *Humph! He must want that money awful bad! Shouldn't think his wife would want him workin' so hard.*

MUSIC:—(THEME. DANCE MACABRE. UP AND UNDER, QUICKLY)

HAAS: I thought that very well done. Were the sound effects worked out by the students themselves?

COLE: Yes, we employed a phonograph record for the musical bridges, but the sound of dishes and silver rattling, the telephone bell, footsteps, doors opening and closing and so forth were all done by the students.

HAAS: How many people were involved in your show?

COLE: There were seven students — half the class. The remaining seven worked with Mr. Nelson.

NELSON: Our show was called "The Curved Dagger Murder" and was set in Liverpool because we had a sound effects record of Big Ben. Listen to the opening:

SOUND:—(CLICK, AS TAPE RECORDER IS TURNED ON, ETC).

SOUND:—(BIG BEN. STRIKES TWELVE)

NARRATOR: *England, 1939. . .*

MUSIC:—(THEME. WARSAW CONCERTO. UP AND UNDER)

NARRATOR: *One night in Liverpool, two young Americans, members of the Associated Press, are eating dinner at the Sea Dragon Inn, a little cafe on the waterfront . . .*

SOUND:—(DISHES RATTLE)

JANE: (SIGHING) *That was a wonderful meal.*

STEVE: *Glad you enjoyed it. Next time I recommend a place, don't turn up your nose.*

JANE: Steve (QUIETLY), *look at those two men who just came in. Don't they look suspicious?*

STEVE: *They are rather peculiar, but look—you stick to your camera and I'll handle the stories.*

JANE: *All right, big shot. I was just trying to be helpful. The AP will send you stateside if you muff a good story.*

STEVE: *See, there's nothing suspicious about them. They're just using the phone.*

SOUND:—(COIN DROPPING IN PAY PHONE)

JANE: *Just the same, I'd still like to listen to that conversation.*

MAN'S VOICE: (OFF MIKE) *Piccadilly 3131. (PAUSE) Have arrived at the Sea Dragon Inn.*

WOMAN'S VOICE: (OFF MIKE) *Good. Have you located the shipment yet?*

MAN'S VOICE: (OFF MIKE) *All is well.*

WOMAN'S VOICE: (OFF MIKE) *Good. Bring it to rendezvous 13. And do not fail. Remember what happened to the last dog who displeased the Master!*

MAN'S VOICE: (OFF MIKE) (FEARFULLY) *I . . . I will not fail!*

NELSON: We decided to set the show in Liverpool instead of London because we wanted to be certain we had a dockside district. This was one place we should have done some geographical research, but we didn't. We finally got the characters

up to London, although it took several murders to do it!

HAAS: I presume both you and Miss Cole were attempting to accomplish the same thing, that is, develop a pleasant speaking voice and stressing enunciation, proper pronunciation, as well as radio appreciation.

NELSON: That's right. In addition, we were trying to develop the individual vocabularies of our students as well as to give them some indication of dramatic structure as a literary type.

HAAS: I'm certain Miss Cole and I would like to hear more of your show. Did you do anything with the scripts other than to record and analyze?

NELSON: Yes, we did. Miss Cole and I presented the scripts in an assembly. We set up a broadcasting studio on the stage and simulated a broadcast before the student body.

HAAS: That would appear to have value. It helps the students perform with ease in an audience situation. Do you feel that this training is valuable in helping students meet their social responsibilities?

NELSON: Both Miss Cole and I think it extremely important. Not only must citizens, to be effective members in a democracy, be able to speak their convictions before a group; but they must also be able to speak into a microphone. Both are extremely important aspects of communication.

HAAS: One of the things that impressed me most, in listening to these tape recordings, is the mature quality of the students' voices. I noticed remarkable development in poise, enunciation, and breath control. Too, it sounds in both shows that the students were having a lot of fun.

NELSON: They did. (LAUGHINGLY) And so did we!

COLE: The learning which came through the production of these shows seems to have stuck. I notice that our students are beginning to say *forget* and *get* rather than *fergit* and *git*. The pronunciation is becoming quite natural and is certainly not forced. The use of recordings has been very valuable in helping students to recognize their own speech deficiencies and to give them motivation to do something about them.

HAAS: I think the students are to be congratulated on the gains they've made. I hope you will be able to present another program before the student body. It will be a fine thing to make all of our students conscious of their voices so that they can do something with them instead of going through life inarticulate and silent.

NELSON: It seems to Miss Cole and me that the unit on radio speaking has accomplished many desirable results so far in this very direction.

HAAS: I believe you are right. Thank you both for letting us listen to these student produced radio shows.

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# The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS<sup>1</sup>

American Education Week 1951 will be celebrated November 11-17. The general theme for this year's celebration will be "Unite for Freedom." Daily themes are as follows:

Sunday Nov. 11: "Our Faith in God"  
Monday Nov. 12 "Schools and Defense"  
Tuesday Nov. 13: "Schools Keep Us Free"  
Wednesday Nov. 14: "Education for the Long Pull"  
Thursday Nov. 15: "Teaching the Fundamentals"  
Friday Nov. 16: "Urgent School Needs"  
Saturday Nov. 17: "Home-School-Community"

Language arts teachers, upon whose shoulders the planning of school programs for such celebrations usually fall, may find the following materials, which may be ordered from the N. E. A., helpful:

## General

*Manual for American Education Week 1951.* General suggestions for observance and daily program events. Twenty-five cents. 16 pp.

*An Invitation.* A leaflet designed to be addressed to parents. Space for personal message inviting them to visit school during American Education Week. Twenty for twenty-five cents. 8 pp.

## Plays

*Steve Harding Wakes Up*, by Evelyn L. Bull. A play for upper elementary grades and junior high school written for American Education Week 1950. Easy staging. No special costuming. Twenty-five cents. 20 pp.

*We Make the Flag*, by Evelyn L. Bull. A play for primary grades written for American Education Week 1949. Large number of speaking parts, but some children may be used in several scenes. Twenty-five cents. 12 pp.

*Frankie and the Firebug*, by Shirley Guralnick. A safety play for intermediate grades written for American Education Week 1949. Twenty-five cents. 12 pp.

A complete listing of the materials available for this celebration, including poster, stickers, radio scripts, and leaflets, may be found in the September NEA *Journal*.



A rewarding language arts activity, and one, happily, in which children in the upper elementary find great pleasure is international "pen-pals." From an article in the September *Illinois Education* by Helen Conover we are listing sources from which children or their teachers may obtain names of young correspondents:

*International Friendship League*, 40 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston. (This organization charges fifty cents to discourage those who are not really serious letter writers. Applicants should give their age, address, father's occupation, personal ambitions, and hobbies or interests).

*Division of International Education*, U. S. Office of Education, Washington 25, D. C.

*American Junior Red Cross*, Washington 13, D. C.

*Student Forum on International Relations*. 530 Powell Street, San Francisco 4. (Fee: ten cents).

*George Peabody Bureau of Foreign Correspondence*, Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn. (Fee: ten cents).

*World Friendship Among Children, Church World Service*, 214 East 21st Street, New York 10.

*Pen Friends Division, English Speaking Union*, 19 East 54th Street, New York 22.

<sup>1</sup>John Deere Junior High School, Moline, Ill.

*Common Council for American Unity*, Wendell Willkie Memorial Building, 20 West 40th Street, New York 18.

While "international pen pals" is an excellent way to build international relations (and good language arts exercises, too'), we would like to repeat a warning which Miss Conover voices in her article: "These young correspondents, however, often need guidance in their responsibilities as ambassadors of freedom. They should be reminded to present a true picture of our life with its privileges and responsibilities, and of our work for our privileges. They should be reminded that these boys and girls in other lands want to know our language, our ways of earning a living, as well as how we play."



Writing in the September issue of the *NEA Journal*, in an article titled "Making It Their Own," Lillian Gray raises the question of how teachers can help students learn to transfer their reading vocabulary to their thinking, speaking, and writing vocabularies. The latter three are overburdened with trite exclamatory adjectives and adverbs and weak, inept verbs. This must be the case, Miss Gray says, when humorous apology is given when big words are spoken on the radio, and when comic books, radio, television, movies, and even the man on the street, mirror these inadequacies.

Viewing the situation, and basing the solution on the fact that the reading vocabulary is the largest, Miss Gray feels that the problem of transferring words met in reading to thinking, speaking, and writing vocabularies may be met in this fashion:

1. Add prestige to the precise use of the mother tongue.
2. Help the child to understand key words in reading.
3. Help him to write clearly.
4. Provide him with opportunities to compare the vivid and trite in context, preferably his own.

5. Show him the importance of right choice of words in communication.

6. Use picture dictionaries frequently.



We have noticed lately that more commercial magazines are including articles on our schools, and on education in general, in their non-fiction sections. This is especially true of the so-called "slicks," which, because of their large circulation and readership, is fortunate or unfortunate—depending on the quality of the article.

Two recent articles which teachers might like to investigate themselves, or call to the attention of their laymen friends are these:

"Is Your Child's Teacher Educated?" by Frances V. Rummell, in the October *Woman's Home Companion*.

"How Good Are Your Schools?" by Wilbur A. Yauch, in the September *American Magazine*.

Mr. Yauch's article, based on his book with the same title (*Harper*), attempts to answer these three questions: (1) What does a good school look like? (2) What do parents need to know about a good school? (3) What can parents do about it?



"Stand Up for English," and article by Hardy Finch in the September 26 issue of *Scholastic Teacher* is a frank plea to language arts people to look to their area to find ways in which they can do a more effective job of public relations to prevent English from slipping into the role of a secondary or minor area in our schools' curricula. Citing Dr. Dora V. Smith's declaration that, "In a war of ideas the language arts are most important," Mr. Finch says that, unfortunately, today English is being made a minor division of social studies, a part of guidance, or a small part of many other areas of activity in the school. He suggests that in their work teachers of English, in essence, do

the following things to retain for their area its rightful place in the curriculum:

1. Do the best possible job in their classrooms.
2. Show their co-workers what they are doing.
3. Object to unqualified English teachers.
4. Urge workshops to use English as a core.
5. Work toward smaller size classes where more effective work might be done.
6. Advocate more time for English instead of the present trend of cutting the time.
7. Belong to professional organizations of English teachers.



C. Howard Smith, a teacher in East Orange, N. J. has developed "Seven Rules for TV," which teachers might offer to parents who report problems with their children arising from over-use and misuse of that medium (Teachers who have problem ssuch as pupils not doing their work because of TV might enlist parents in such a systematic program, also).

Mr. Smith's "seven rules" are:

1. Watch with kids occasionally to find their interests.
2. Set a schedule for amount of viewing time.
3. Plan time-outs between viewing.
4. Fit timetable to fit the sleeping schedule.
5. Keep TV away from meals.
6. Homework done before watching. (Unlike radio, TV and homework don't mix at all).
7. Work comes before play. (School and non-school work).



Teachers may find an amusing moment or two with the following sentence from *Word Study* which can be pronounced in six different ways:

"I never said he stole."

*Word Study*, edited by Max Herzberg, is an interesting eight-page pamphlet about words. It is available free on request from the G. and

C. Merriam Co., Department ST, Springfield 2, Mass.



"Poor speech habits in the classroom are responsible for such defects in spelling as wether for whether, Febuary for February, hurring for hurrying, chimley for chimney, atheletics for athletics, accidently for accidentally, bronchial for bronchial, goverment for government, reconize for recognize," writes Everett Robie, principal, Stark School, Glenbrook, Conn., in his interesting leaflet, *Spelling by Rule and Reason* (price ten cents a copy).

Mr. Robie also has available a 14-page booklet explaining figures of speech.



Teachers, parents, and librarians may find the following articles from *Hornbook* magazine, now available reprinted in pamphlet form, helpful:

"The Joy That Music Can Give," by Evelyn H. Hunt

"Of Reading With My Children," by Elizabeth Reed

"Storytelling vs. Recordings," by Eulalie Steinmetz

"Some Problems in Modern Book Illustration," by Margaret B. Evans.

The prices of the first two reprints are fifteen and ten cents, respectively. Any of the articles may be ordered from *Hornbook*, 248 Boylston Street, Boston 16, Mass.



Teachers and librarians may find the following materials assembled by Leonard S. Kenworthy of Brooklyn College helpful in their language arts work:

*Asia in the Social Studies Curriculum*: a discussion of the aims in teaching about Asia in the elementary and the secondary school, with lists of books, booklets, films, film strips, maps, and charts. Price fifty cents. 44 pp.

*Developing World-Minded Children*: Re-





## Review and Criticism

[The brief reviews in this issue are by Lyla Hoffine, Herbert S. Zim, Jean Gardiner Smith, Elizabeth Guilfoile, Charlemae Rollins, Sonia Bleeker, Helen C. Bough, Frances E. Whitehead, Frances Rees, Bernice D. Fiske, Kathryn Hodapp, Agnes Krarup, Danylu Belser, La Tourette Stockwell, R. Will Burnett, and Michael Lieberman. Unsigned annotations are by the editor.]

### *For the Teacher*

*The Quick and the Dead*. Vol. 1, *The Story of the Atom Bomb*. Vol. 2, *The Story of the Hydrogen Bomb*. Presented by the National Broadcasting Company. RCA Victor Red Seal Records. Each volume consists of one double faced long playing (thirty three and a third rpm) record.

The chief obstacle to a generally informed population, so far as atomic energy is concerned, appears to be the combined factors of fear and apathy. That the public is generally poorly informed even about the most rudimentary facts of nuclear fission and issues of national and international policy has consistently been shown whenever interview or other evaluative techniques have been applied. These same techniques have commonly shown that the average American has a vague and disassociated fear of the whole area of atomic energy and that he both dislikes to think seriously about the subject and believes that he "cannot understand" atomic energy.

These recordings should provide some needed help in removing these psychological blockages. The presentation starts out by pointing up these very blockages. Bob Hope serves to draw the listener's attention away from himself by confessing to being quite frightened by the task of understanding atomic energy. The listener is immediately reassured. For here is Bob Hope "who gets around enough he ought to be informed," obviously embarrassed about

his ignorance, yet spoofing his way around his discomfiture, and proceeding to learn. Hope proposes a painless way of finding out about atomic energy and what goes on in this field today. He decides he will learn through the eyes and ears of a popular writer on science subjects. The listener soon has so completely identified himself with Mr. Hope that he relaxes, is no longer afraid of the subject and, presumably, is in a psychologically advantageous position of beginning to think and to learn about atomic energy.

The account then proceeds to develop the story of atomic energy: its nature, its history so far as controlled release is concerned; and its double-edged possibilities in the future. This is done through the eyes and ears of Mr. William L. Laurence, a top-flight writer of materials for popular consumption in scientific fields. As Mr. Laurence and Mr. Hope discuss atomic energy their voices fade away and scenes depicting notable stages in the history of atomic energy and its controlled release come to the fore. The listener hears many of the great and near-great as well as unnoted men and women each of whom had their knowing or unknowing parts to play in the drama of the atomic age. Most of the voices heard and the scenes depicted are from prior recordings which have been skillfully blended in these records to give a developmental picture. In a few cases actors and actresses play the parts of those who had important roles in the search for the controlled release of atomic energy. Chiefly, the voices are authentic.

The job of interweaving historical narrative and vignettes from actual events with scientific exposition has been well done. A fair balance has been struck between the destructive and constructive uses and possibilities of the atom.

A chief objection to these recordings is that the account, although lengthy (somewhat better

than two hours will be required for hearing the two records in their entirety), is thin from the standpoint of scientific understanding and in terms of relative emphasis. The entire account is presented in a flat plane. It is good exposition but it does not emphasize the several facets of atomic energy that must be emphasized in order that the American people will become cognizant of the possibilities in atomic energy and will share in the development of sound policy. This may not be a legitimate objection in terms of the apparent purpose for which the recordings were done. They were evidently intended as an expository primer of the history and nature of atomic energy. But one can wish that the relatively flat plane of the recordings had shown a few dominant peaks of emphasis where emphasis is clearly desirable from an educational point of view.

Too, Mr. Fred Friendly, the writer and director, underestimates the capacity of the general public, we believe, to absorb and understand the science of the atom. As Professor D. P. Ausubel has stated:

"After the initial cautious incision one expected the narrator to gradually probe deeper and present more of the physics of atomic structure. But instead he hews to the periphery and continues on the same superficial plane throughout. The patient is prepared for a major operation with a spinal anaesthetic, and in the end he is surprised to learn that only a molar is extracted."

But, maybe, the molar having been extracted without pain, the patient, under the guidance of a good teacher, will expose himself to the more searching probings and issues that even seventh grade youngsters have shown they can "endure" with both interest and profit. The records have their proper place as motivating devices. When used with the increasing number of good references, films, and materials available to teachers and children, they can help to set the stage, stimulate reading and other forms of inquiry on the part of children, and challenge a generation of children to face up

to the reality and promise of the atomic age.

R. W. Burnett

College of Education

The University of Illinois

*Writing for Young People.* By Mabel Louise Robinson. Nelson, \$2.75.

I doubt whether any how-to book for writers of juveniles stems from equally rich experience. Dr. Mabel Louise Robinson, author of some two dozen successful books, has conducted Writers' Workshops at Columbia University in New York for many years. This book was first published in 1922 and is now completely revised, incorporating another three decades of the author's experiences as writer and teacher.

Dr. Robinson believes that to write for children is a dedicated vocation. She firmly states that no person should turn to juvenile writing because he or she doesn't know enough to write for adults. "Writing for children should not be taken lightly. . . ." Rather, "when they (the writers) have learned enough to write for an adult perhaps a child will listen to them. . . ."

Dr. Robinson discusses the writer's problems: planning, style, plot structure, characterization. "Write of what you know and have emotionally experienced." Being a good teacher, Dr. Robinson does not raise the question that plagues every potential writer, "Can I really write?" She evidently assumes you can. For the beginner this book will present concisely the major problems a new writer has to face. It is understood that as he continues writing, only he and he alone can solve the individual creative problems that arise.

Some readers will find this book idealistic and somewhat naive. Others may resent its strong convictions and dogmatic statements as to what children want to read and what books help children grow. Specialists in child development are not as positive as Dr. Robinson on these matters.

Dr. Robinson has omitted a very important

phase of writing, marketing the story—essential factor for every writer. The author should have devoted some space to this, if only to the extent of citing her experiences in getting her material and that of her students published. Nonetheless, as an over-all guide this book will be useful to the budding writer.

Sonia Bleeker  
Champaign, Ill.

*For Early Adolescents*

*National Velvet*. By Enid Bagnold. Illustrated by Paul Brown. William Morrow, \$3.00.

It is unfortunate that books go out of print so rapidly, yet the books of little value are cleared away quickly. Then when a really important book comes back it can receive the attention it deserves. *National Velvet* is an important book and should be kept on the book shelves with other great horse stories of all time. It is a story without sugar for either the horse, Piebald, or the heroine, Velvet Brown. It has style and quality. It also has integrity, for though Velvet and Piebald win the Grand National there is no happy ending in the sense that they were lifted from near poverty to wealth and fame. Velvet was disqualified from the beginning though she managed to ride the race, but the rules held as rules should hold and her satisfaction lay in knowing that her horse could win. It is an altogether satisfactory ending.

*National Velvet* is more than a horse story; it is a story of a way of life in England that should interest the teen age girl. There is a faithfulness to the life and language of the people that may disturb the reader who sees words rather than the people in the book, yet it is all so much a part of book that it will be little noted and not at all disturbing to the average reader. To say that Paul Brown has illustrated the book is recommendation in itself.

L. H.

*Patterns in the Sky*. By W. Maxwell Reed. Illustrated by D. F. Levett Bradley. Wm. Morrow & Co., \$2.50.

*You among the Stars*. By Herman & Nina

Schneider. Illustrated by Symeon Shimin. Wm. R. Scott (no price given).

Both W. Maxwell Reed and the Schneiders are skilled writers of informational books for young people. Neither has hit par this time, though both books deserve a place in every library and classroom bookshelf. Having done so well in *The Stars for Sam*, Reed has left himself thin pickings in dealing with the constellations. The mixture of mythology and astronomy separates like a thin salad dressing, revealing a dearth of facts about the stars themselves. The illustrations showing the mythological figures and the stars as seen in the sky will be of value to beginners.

The Schneider book uses the device of extending Lucy and Robert's address, Central City, Ill., in the U. S. A., out to the solar system, the milky way and the universe. This takes readers exploring the immense solar and stellar systems of which they are a part. The lithographs that stud the book are delightful, but they do not convey the factual information found in the illustrations of previous Schneider books. The text, just right for the upper elementary grades, is right up to the author's best. H. S. Z.

*The Catcher from Double-A*. By Duane Decker. Morrow, \$2.50.

*Fast Man on a Pivot*. By Duane Decker. Morrow, \$2.50.

Take one baseball player who has failed in other years but is coming up for a last chance, one manager or cocky player not in sympathy, a winning game in the last chapter—season well with baseball jargon, and the hero is set for the season. The Decker stories have the value of adding a personal problem to the baseball story, but the characters never come through as three-dimensional.

The Catcher from Double-A has all that it takes except self confidence so that he fails to deliver the goods at the crucial moment of the game. Fast Man on a Pivot is a second baseman who is a steady player and good for team morale, but he is not flashy enough to appeal

to the fans. In the end, thanks to other members of the team, both men win out and are with the Blue Sox for keeps.

J. G. S.

*Centerburg Tales.* By Robert McCloskey. Viking, \$2.50.

Homer Price, his friend, Freddy, and other village characters romp through this hilarious story to the tune of Centerburg's juke boxes and patented doughnut machines. Strictly modern too is the democratic town meeting in which the citizens cope with the grave threat of giant ragweed about to burst into bloom. This vegetation is the product of that uncooperative citizen, Dulcy Dooner, who inherited the seeds of this fearful plant which rivals the oaks and maples of Centerburg in size. Dulcy requires the town treasury to pay for his crop before he will consent to destroy it, but cleverly enough the money is taken back into the town's coffers. The daily adventures of Centerburg citizens rival the tall tales of Gramma Hercules who claimed to have leapt straight up the side of a cliff in his young days. McCloskey illustrates his own books and the pictures contribute much of the humor of the story.

E. G.

*Weathercraft.* By Athelstan F. Spilhaus. Illustrated with photographs and weather maps. Viking, \$2.00.

Here is an account of one man who "did something about the weather." In simple, easy language and with materials already in the home, he tells how anyone can build and operate a home weather station. The author is a meteorologist who with his son set up a weather station and this book, complete with photographs, charts, graphs, and clear directions, tells how it is done. With materials already in the home, any parent or group leader could help one or more young people enjoy an exciting and worthwhile hobby. The photograph illustrations are excellent.

C. R.

*The Peasant Boy Who Became Pope.* By Harriet Lattin. Henry Schuman, \$2.50.

This is the biography of Gerbert, the peas-

ant boy who by intelligence and hard work became Pope Sylvester II. The book is a skillful biography, a trifle scholarly for the slower reader. It is not a religious document but the history of a human being and his relation to the world in which he lived. Boys interested in history, particularly history that began in 951, will like this book. It is recommended for boys and girls from 11 to 15.

L. H.

*John Wesley.* By May McNeer and Lynd Ward. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.50.

McNeer and Ward are a writer-artist team who have turned out a story of one of the world's noteables who chose religion rather than law, medicine, or other occupation. This is the simple frequently illustrated story of the founder of the Methodist church. The author avoids all discussion of dogma. The reader gets a good picture of England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. We need stories such as this to complete the child's acquaintance with all sides of life in the past.

L. H.

*Cortes of Mexico.* By Ronald Syme. Illustrated by W. Stobbs. William Morrow, \$2.50.

There is little anyone can add today to the well-known story of Hernando Cortes of Spain and his conquest of Mexico. Every school history devotes space to him and his meeting with Montezuma. Mr. Syme has enlarged on this incident and has written a biography of Cortes (for the 8-14-agers) with the skill and imagination of a novelist. Though he has deviated somewhat in historical detail, he has produced an extremely sympathetic portrait of Cortes, vital and vibrant with adventure. The illustrations are as excellent as the writing and, I for one, wish there were more of them in the book.

S. B.

*Robert E. Lee.* By Guy Emery. Messner, \$2.75.

Written by a Virginian and a West Pointer, this biography emphasizes the military accomplishments of Lee. A rather realistic introduction to the Lee heritage is given with a survey of social life and customs of Virginian gentlemen of the period. Lee's entire life is re-



viewed, with due emphasis on the influence of his brothers, his mother, and later his wife. His military service and many battle details are given, concluding with his surrender to Grant. More factual than inspirational in tone.

H. C. B.

*Wild Hunter.* By K. C. Randall. Illustrated by Manning DeV. Lee. Franklin Watts, \$2.50.

Eleven-year-old Bob Armitage gets a job with Al Doane, head trainer at a Michigan Hunting Club, and together they find and train Princess, a magnificent bird dog. A wealthy, unscrupulous member of the Club accidentally shoots the dog, which makes her gun shy, and therefore useless as a hunter.

Bob's love for Princess and his faith and hard work help her to overcome the handicap. Good writing and excellent family relationships make this a first rate story for boys, 11 years and up.

C. R.

*The Sword and The Compass.* By Margaret Leighton. Illustrated by James Leighton. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.75.

There is much more to the story of Captain John Smith than his rescue from death by the Indian Princess Pocahontas. This is the exciting life of a swash-buckling hero who grew up in a small English village and became a great soldier-of-fortune. He was made a prisoner by the Turks, sold as a slave and sent to Constantinople, where he fell in love with his beautiful owner. After escaping and returning to England, he sailed for America and his greatest adventure.

Smith escaped being hanged twice by jealous colonists and narrowly escaped death from hostile tribes. He managed to explore most of the eastern coast of America and to establish Jamestown permanently. He returned to England where he wrote several books about the new world, with the single aim—the welfare of the colonies, his "children," as he called them. He was one of the great men who had a part in America's making.

B. D. F.

*Book of Cowboy Stories.* Written and illus-

trated by Will James. Scribner, \$2.50.

For authentic cowboy material, Will James is still a first choice. A horse who faked lameness, blizzards, rustlers, and a horse thief are included in the fifteen stories. The material is taken from other books by the author, but is well selected so that each story stands by itself as a complete incident.

J. G. S.

*Strong Wings.* By Mabel Louise Robinson. Illustrations by Lynd Ward. Random House.

Constance, Marilyn, and Christopher Sayre had spent several summers in Maine but now had to stay when their parents were unexpectedly delayed in England. To help with their finances, Sonnie took over the village school during the illness of the regular teacher. Trying to fit into the lives of the natives, and meeting problems of everyday living helped the children develop materially. The slight romance of Connie and the game warden will appeal to older girls. The author of *Bright Island* has written another admirable story of life in Maine. Chapter headings by Lynd Ward illuminate the story.

K. H.

*Valley of the Dragon,* by Olive Price. Illustrated by John Mement. Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.50.

A story of Lin Fu, a camel boy, and his search for Wandering Star, a snow-white mare which had been stolen from the royal stables of the great Kublai Khan. Aided by a friendless slave girl, Jasmine, the pursuit leads to many exciting adventures. When Lin Fu at last returned the mare to the Khan, he was rewarded by an appointment to the royal stables where he was to take care of Wandering Star. A fascinating story of 13th century Cathay in which Marco Polo plays a part.

K. H.

*The Iliad of Homer.* By Alfred J. Church. Illustrated by John Flaxman, Macmillan, \$2.00.

These tales of the *Iliad* follow closely the outline of the lengthier translations for adults, but they are simplified both in respect to the amount of detail included and in respect to the difficulty of the prose. In spite of the simplifi-

cation, the book is still packed with quick action and a wealth of incident, so much so that the teacher may have to help with an introduction to the many characters and customs. The language, although simplified, is still appropriate to the heroic tone of the tales and should be read with ease by children of the intermediate grades and early junior high school.

V. L. G.

*The Odyssey of Homer.* By Alfred J. Church.

Illustrated by John Flaxman. Macmillan, \$2.00.

The *Odyssey* is the companion volume to the *Iliad* and, like the original, its tales are less war-like in content but filled with more of the romantic and marvelous. For the illustrations of both epics, the publishers have chosen the designs of John Flaxman (1755-1826). Flaxman's drawings reflect the qualities of old Greek vase paintings, simple and full of beauty.

V. L. G.

*Mahatma Gandhi.* By Catherine Owens Peare.

Illustrated with photographs. Henry Holt, \$2.75.

This account of the life of India's great leader begins when Kasturba, an eleven-year-old girl places her hand in that of a thirteen-year-old boy, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, in a wedding ceremony. The complicated social, religious, and political background of India during the lifetime of this great pacifist leader is skillfully woven as a background for this full-length portrait of one of the great citizens of our world, up to the time of the procession that carried him to his funeral pyre.

Adolescents will derive comfort from the fact that this great leader, too, went through a trying period in finding himself; and they will be inspired by his unswerving devotion to a cause which made him emerge as one of the outstanding leaders of our time.

L. E. N.

*The Silver Wolf.* By Merritt Parmelee Allen.

Decorations by Allen Thomas. Longmans, Green, \$2.50.

Fleeing from his apprenticeship to a saddle

maker, 17 year old Kit Carson comes upon a wagon train headed for Santa Fe. During the three months on the trail, Kit is initiated in the ways of the West. An ancient lucky charm in the likeness of a silver wolf highlights the plot. It leads Kit Carson and his pal, Judd Hunter, on a hunt for a long lost silver mine and the murderer of Judd's brother. A realistic presentation of Kit's insatiable curiosity of all things around him foretelling his future fame as a pioneer trailmaker.

H. C. B.

*Partners with Nature.* By Ivah Green. International Textbook Company, \$1.75.

Many close-up photographs illustrate this text on wild life for the boys and girls of elementary school life. Ivah Green, out of experience as a supervisor of Rural Education in Iowa, has selected significant materials from animal and insect life and from plant growth to point to the importance of nature's resources and to interest children in all the important phases of conservation. The style is slightly reminiscent of earlier approaches to the understanding of nature. Authors such as Ernest Thompson Seton, Felix Salten and Kenneth Grahame are reflected in the style as well as referred to directly as references. But there is an enormous amount of information in the book, interesting and important to the young reader who will accept this style. Print and format are exceptional and the binding permits of the much-to-be desired flat opening of the book.

E. G.

### For the Middle Grades

*People are Important.* By Eva Knox Evans. Illustrated by Vana Earle. Capitol Publishing Co., \$2.50.

In a simple, chatty, somewhat humorous style, the author tells the 4th and 5th graders *why* people are important. She points up the differences in the ways people talk, eat, sleep, make love; what they wear, how they feel, how they greet each other; the different ways they spell and pronounce names; and after each example of the differences she shows how little

they matter. In each case she emphasizes the importance of the individual.

This is similar in format and style to *All About Us*. It does not duplicate this book, but includes more anthropological facts to prove people are fundamentally alike. Teachers may find it useful as a read-aloud book for stimulating pupil discussion.

C. R.

*William Henry Harrison: Young Tippecanoe.*

By Howard Peckham. Illustrated by Paul Laune. Bobbs-Merrill Co., \$1.75.

Teachers who have discovered how useful the books in the *Childhood of Famous Americans Series* are for remedial reading in sixth and seventh grades will welcome this new title. It follows the usual pattern of developing child-like incidents in the life of a hero against an authentic background, in this case the American Revolution. The first part of the book succeeds well in its purpose, but the brief summary of Harrison's adult career seems rather confusing.

A. K.

*The Story of Serapina.* By Anne H. White. Illustrated by Tony Palazzo. Viking, \$2.50.

The artist with his clever illustrations has captured the spirit of Serapina, "a most unusual cat." She had a long and talented tail with which she could, open a door, and carry a glass of milk without spilling a drop. Mrs. Salinus worried about what people would say when they knew that the Salinus family had a cat, "who didn't make sense." Mr. Salinus said "he would rather be embarrassed with Serapina than embarrassed without her," and their three children heartily agreed.

B. D. F.

*King Philip.* By Esther Averill. Illustrated by Vera Belsky. Harper, \$2.50.

The history of New England almost came to an abrupt and bloody end in 1675-6, when King Philip organized the New England Indians for a war of extermination. In that year, the Indians attacked fifty-two of the ninety New England settlements and burned about a dozen. This crucial period, now known as King Philip's War, came to a close when the colonial

troops routed the Indians, shot and—in the fashion of that day—mutilated and decapitated their leader. This leader was Metacom, a Wampanoag Indian, named King Philip by the English.

Young readers will get a faithful account of the war in this brief story, but only a few blurred glimpses of King Philip himself, the remarkable Indian organizer, commander, and statesman, who succeeded in rallying the New England Indians against the better-armed colonists. It is disappointing not to see King Philip, the man, within his own environment, within his family circle and council fire.

S. B.

*Tallie.* By Mildred Lawrence. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.50.

An eleven-year-old orphan, Tallie, feels very "medium" when she compares herself with the gay and clever Jarretts who have taken her on trial from the Home. Even after they include her in their move to Pennsylvania she is apprehensive that they may not adopt her permanently. Sturdy, loyal, and practical, she helps make the new venture a business success and becomes an important member of the family. She may seem a little over-humble to the adult reader, but doubtless many children will understand her anxiety over her own worth. Written with warmth and humor, the book should appeal to fifth and sixth graders.

A. K.

*California Mission Days.* By Helen Bauer. Doubleday, \$2.50.

In this volume developed for the California children full page photographs show the missions as they are today, and authentic pictures of the old missions show how they looked when the padres left them.

It was under the flag of Spain that Father Junipero Serra founded the first mission at San Diego in 1769. He and his fellow Jesuits established twenty-one of these communal settlements, one day's foot journey apart. The last, San Francisco de Solana, the mission farthest north, was founded in 1823.

When Mexico threw off the yoke of Spain and became an independent country the missions suffered. By government edict the missions were taken from the priests, the lands were sold, and the Indians who had come to live and work at the settlements were scattered. Since California has been part of the United States, twenty of the twenty-one missions in the original chain have been restored. E. G.

*The Peculiar Miss Pickett.* By Nancy R. Julian. Winston, \$1.50.

This is the story of the old lady with big glasses who did wonderful things for the children when she came to baby sit. The character is fanciful as was Mary Poppins, though lacking in Mary's charm and humor. Illustrations by Donald E. Cooke add to the story. L. H.

*State Birds and Flowers.* By Olive L. Earle. Illustrated by the author. William Morrow, \$2.00.

The choosing of state birds and flowers represents a mixture of local pride, sentiment, and perhaps pressure by well-meaning groups of citizens. It is hard to account for some of the choices made which include cultivated and introduced plants, and birds which are neither unique nor even characteristic of the state or region. However, despite this rather flimsy warp, the author has woven a fine textured fabric, brightened by clear detail, interesting fact, and clear, accurate presentation. The illustrations are clean and sharp. The book will satisfy many pupils in the intermediate and upper grades, and their teachers too. H. S. Z.

*Animal Tools.* By George F. Mason. Illustrated by the author. William Morrow, \$2.00.

This fourth book of a delightful series is another one to add to the "truth is stranger than fiction" file. Details of spinners, stingers, mouth parts, and appendages, which might be lost in a zoology or entomology text, are presented as examples of adaptations that rival Ripley's best. Mr. Mason has drawn heavily on insects, but the vertebrates are not neglected. His writ-

ing is, as usual, clear, direct and entertaining. H. S. Z.

*Three Times Easier.* By Clarice Font. Illustrated by Flavia Gag. David McKay, \$2.00.

In spite of trials and tribulations, Joan, Lucy and Susy Carter did all the household tasks alone while their mother was ill. In time the mother returned home in a wheel chair, physically well but with no desire to attempt to walk. Susy's accident with her new bicycle forced the mother to go to her assistance and cured her. A story of happy family life made "three times easier" with everyone doing their share and pulling together. K. H.

*Peter Graves.* By William Pène du Bois. Viking, \$2.50.

Peter Graves thought he was quite smart in a game of follow-the-leader when he led his gang right to the "horrible house of Houghton." Then he turned around to find that not a member of his gang was behind him, and that he was face to face with Horrible Houghton himself. Escape was out of the question, and so much the better for the reader of William Pène du Bois' *Peter Graves*.

Peter, with his wild imagination, remained with this fabulous scientist, and together they electrified and baffled audiences by performing such feats as parachuting skyward and climbing the Indian rope to disappear in a cloud of smoke. These audiences did not know of Houghton's anti-gravity metal Furloy. A member of every audience, the man with the walrus mustache, one Llewellyn Pierpont Boopfaddle, supplies the mystery element in this nonsense tale for youngsters of twelve up. Amusing illustrations by the author are just right for the story. F. R.

*Play With Vines.* By Millicent E. Selsam. Illustrated by Fred F. Scherer. Morrow, \$2.00.

A perfect book about vines for younger children. How vines cling and climb—and how they manage to stay there—is a fascinating story. This book describes the getting-around-



and-holding-on methods of all kinds of vines from the familiar morning-glory to the canary-bird vine. Simple experiments that the reader can do himself add to the usefulness of the book. The many excellent drawings and large type make the book attractive to young readers. The interesting presentation of the subject will appeal to their parents as well. B. D. F.

*The Apple and The Arrow.* By Mary and Conrad Buff. Illustrated by the Authors. Houghton Mifflin, \$3.00.

The story of William Tell has been told many times, but this book is as vivid and forceful as the first telling. Walter Tell, son of the Swiss hero, Walter's little brother Rudi, their family, and friends, are as real as the people next door. The pencil drawings and colored illustrations help tell the story of brave men and women fighting for freedom. B. D. F.

*Orlando's Home Life.* By Kathleen Hale. Coward McCann. No price given.

Remembering Ann T. Eaton's standard, "It takes skill in writing, judgment, taste, and sense of humor in good working order to write a nonsense masterpiece," Kathleen Hale's nonsense picture-book of animals as ourselves cannot be recommended as a story of high merit. It is regrettable that the story does not measure up to the illustrations. D. B.

### For Younger Children

*Tim and the Tool Chest.* By Jerrold Beim. Illustrated by Tracy Sugarman, William Morrow, \$2.00.

Jerrold Beim is an old hand with young boys. He sees through their eyes. He speaks their language. Tim's problems with his club house make up more than just a story. The young reader will pick up a heap of direct, handy information on simple tools and their use. Since using tools makes possible boats and trains, houses and wagons, this book becomes a "must" for the would-be carpenter—and that is about every boy (and many girls) from 6 to 10. H. S. Z.

*Hop Skip & Fly.* By Irmengarde Eberle. Pictures by Else Bostelman. Holiday House. \$2.00.

A new revised edition of a greatly praised nature book first issued in 1937. Includes the life stories of the frog, the scorpion, brown bat, stickleback, garter snake, and lizard. Stories of the ant and the wasp in the earlier edition have been omitted and a new one, that of "The Take-Your-Time Snail" has been added. Children 5-10 will love this book because it answers all the questions they always ask about these small creatures. Well printed and illustrated on good paper. L. T. S.

*Mr. T. W. Anthony Woo.* By Marie Hall Ets. Viking, \$2.00.

What happens when a cat, a dog, and a mouse all live together in a cobbler's house?

After listening with delight to the tale of the Cobbler of Shoosko and how Meola, his cat, Rodigo, the dog, and the hero, Mr. T. W. Anthony Woo came through a series of difficult experiences to learn the importance of standing together, a five-year-old exclaimed, "Read it again, please! I do like Mr. T. W. Anthony Woo — Mr. T. W. Anthony Woo! What a funny name for a mouse!"

Marie Hall Ets whose rare ability as a storyteller gave us *Mr. Penny*, *Little Old Automobile*, and *Oley the Sea Monster*, has demonstrated again her genius as a maker of picture-story books for young children. As in her other books, bits of wisdom fit naturely into the text of Mr. T. W. Anthony Woo: "There is nothing Dear Sister hates worse than a mouse. That is because she is afraid, Mr. Woo. People always hate the things they are afraid of!"

No less gifted as an illustrator than as a writer, Mrs. Ets has drawn pictures for Mr. T. W. Anthony Woo that are exactly right.

D. B.

*Sophie and Her Puppies.* By Dorothy Sterling. Photographs by Myron Ehrenberg. Doubleday, \$2.50.

"Sophie was the best watchdog on the street,

maybe in the whole world—" Sophie also served as an excellent basis for a photographic study and a warm little account of a mother dog who bears a litter of pups and raises them. The photographs are large and appealing. They show Sophie, a dachshund, before the birth of her puppies and taking care of the puppies until the time of weaning. Several of the photographs show children at play with the puppies and the mother dog reacting with various moods of concern.

The print is large and the account is simple. Children in the primary and middle grades will find not only a sympathetic account but will gain a direct and simple picture of the birth and family life of typical puppies. The following is indicative of the style of writing:

"Early one morning there was a strange noise in Anne's room, a 'mew-mew' noise, like a baby crying, only softer. Sophie was lying on her special blanket. Beside her were four tiny little black balls. As Anne and her brother watched, out came another little ball, all shiny and wet. Sophie pushed it gently until it snuggled against her side."

The child who reads this book will learn many interesting things about puppies and their development. It is clear, as indicated in the quotation above, that the book will form the basis of many additional questions that must be answered by the teacher, parent, or other persons or materials.

R. W. B.

*Grandpa Toggle's Wonderful Book.* By Robert L. Grimes. Illustrated by Beth Wilson. The Caxton Printers, \$2.50.

Grandpa Toggles has a grandson, Jimmy, to whom he tells these eleven "tall tales" of his adventures on his big farm with his little Negro chore boy, B Good. Some of Grandpa's exploits remind one of Paul Bunyan's. All of them have a simple, natural humor that will tickle the imaginations of children 5-10. It may be expected that favorites will be the stories of Twitchy, the Easter Rabbit who grew to be as big as an eighth grade boy, of Flop Ears the

window washing elephant who saved Grandpa's farm from foreclosure, of Maude, the cross-eyed mule who wore glasses to read newspapers, and of Mr. Hero, the persnickity cat who walked into restaurants and ordered steak and cocoanut pie.

L. T. S.

*Poncho and the Pink Horse.* Story and illustrations by Theresa Kalab Smith. The Steck Co.

This story is about Poncho, a little Mexican boy who looked glad when he was sad, and his burro, Chiquita, who looked sad when she was glad. Poncho takes Chiquita to the fiesta, where they meet a ticket seller who helps Poncho achieve his burning ambition to ride the pink horse. At the same time, Poncho manages to earn enough money playing his guitar to keep Chiquita eating hay all winter so that at the conclusion both Poncho and Chiquita return home highly pleased with the outcome of the trip to the fiesta. Some very colorful illustrations heighten the interest of the child who reads or listens to the story.

M. L.

*Three Boys and a Lighthouse.* By Nan Hayden Agle and Ellen Wilson. Illustrated by Marian Honigman. Scribner's, \$2.00.

Abercrombie, Benjamin and Christopher, identical triplets, visited their father, who was a lighthouse keeper. He wanted an assistant, but couldn't decide which one of the boys was the most orderly, dependable, and resourceful. Father was gone all one night giving aid to a wrecked boat, and the three boys took such good care of the lighthouse that all were made assistants. Good easy story for younger children. Black and white illustrations by Marian Honigman with a double page spread of a lighthouse.

K. H.

*Henrietta, The Faithful Hen.* By Kathleen Hale. Coward-McCann.

Henrietta is indeed a remarkable fowl who, having forgotten the trick of egg-laying, nevertheless, manages to provide richly for all who rely upon her. The inspiration for her indus-

trious scratching which unearths a buried Roman city is the creative verse of Mr. Cox beamed at her as the sun rises:

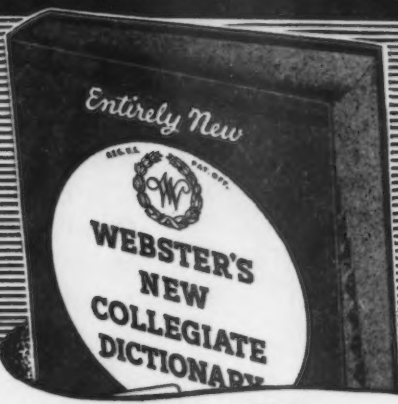
Cock a Doodle Doo!  
Arise with pleasure  
And look for Treasure,  
Do as I tell you, doo!"

All main episodes in this highly imaginative story by Kathleen Hale, an English author-illustrator, are carried faithfully by pictures that are superior to the story. D. B.

*Waggles and The Dog Catcher.* By Marion Belden Cook. Illustrated by Louis Darling. Morrow, \$2.00.

Children will love the story of Waggles, the friendly little white dog without a home. He loved to carry things—a bone, a glove, even an old stick; it made him feel important. Waggles is white all over in the beginning and at the end of the story. In between his life is complicated by the dog catcher. He finds a home at last where he can relax and be his own white self again. The drawings on every page exactly catch the story's lively humor. B. D. F.

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(Continued from Page 416)

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long way toward getting children to express themselves in creative writing. It means thinking of ideas to keep them stimulated, and finding time to help them when they need help. But we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have helped them grow in self-expression.

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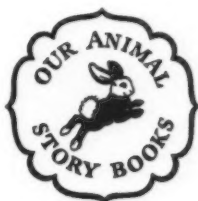
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